

Truth

Magazine



a clash of cultures



guest editorial



CONNIE W. ADAMS

A Clash of Cultures

The religion of our Lord was born and cradled in the bosom of an unholy culture. The Roman Empire stretched from Britain to the Persian Gulf, and from central Europe to the northern shores of Africa. It manifested a strange mixture of military might, pagan philosophy, social incongruities, and moral decadence. Into this boiling pot was introduced a kingdom “not of this world” (John 18:36). Its citizens were identified as “strangers and pilgrims” who were taught to “abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11).

When Two Worlds Collide

The mission of this kingdom was to reconcile the lost to God (Eph. 2:16). But when the lost answered the gospel call, they not only made peace with God, they often found themselves at odds with this world. It was in that light that Jesus said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household” (Matt. 10:34-36). For this reason Peter said, “they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you” (1 Pet. 4:4). While living in the world, the Lord’s people are not of the world. Their heart is focused on the world to come. Their challenge is not to allow the temporal needs of this life to sidetrack them from the ultimate goal. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8).

The Winds of Change

Our own culture is a mix of nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. But it cannot be successfully denied that the foundations of this country were formed by men who believed in the God of the Bible. Laws were made which reflected a reverence for the Judaeo-Christian ethic. This all played into our system of justice, but also honored the role of religion in providing stability in society, from the family

to the workplace. The founding fathers understood that freedom had to have certain boundaries or else it became a hollow platitude. I have the right to swing my arm or to point with my finger, but that freedom does not allow me to hit you in the nose or poke my finger in your eye. Certain restraints are necessary to protect public decency and maintain a civil society. What has happened to change all this?

The industrial revolution was a mixture of good and evil. It changed our society from a largely rural one to an urban one. Families that had worked together for survival on the farm moved to town. A weekly paycheck was a welcomed novelty. But this also made great changes in families. Cities not only meant jobs and more money, they also offered taverns, bars, and theaters. Technology brought us telephones, radios, televisions, computers, cell phones, ipods, and you name it.

World War II drastically changed our culture. Rosie the Riveter did not want to give up her job when husband Johnny came marching home. Along with this growing independence came a rise in the divorce rate and divorce, once frowned upon, now became fashionable and easier to obtain. The 1950s introduced us to rock and roll music, the beatniks and motorcycle gangs: a prelude to the cultural earthquake of the 1960s from which our culture has never recovered.

The Sixties

In June, 1962 at Port Huron, Michigan a camp was held for an alienated, left-wing group of college students (an early convention of Students for a Democratic Society, SDS). Delegates came from eleven campus chapters. They produced a lengthy manifesto revealing their distrust of present society and announcing their plans to change the nation and the world. They were contemptuous of their parents, the American free enterprise system, democracy in general and reflected a bent toward socialism. In his book *Slouching Toward Gomorrah*, Robert Bork quotes from

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a clash about God



GARY HENRY

A. W. Tozer once wrote, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” Of all the concepts that we hold in our minds, none is more crucial than our concept of God. And if the Christian finds himself clashing with his culture over the issue of God, then that is a most serious clash indeed. It would be hard to imagine a more serious disagreement.

There are at least five points at which contemporary culture and the Christian clash over the concept of God. As we will see, the clash is sometimes more in practice than in theory, but either way, the Christian finds himself increasingly at odds with the stance taken by many people in regard to God.

1. The Existence of God. On the subject of God, the most basic question that can be asked is whether there is any such thing as God, and when we compare the present with the past, it is hard not to be alarmed at what seems to be an increase in the number of people who deny the existence of God. Recently a number of books have been published by atheists either propagating their view or attacking the Christian view. These books have sold well and attracted considerable attention in the media. In response to this trend, one major bookstore chain has begun offering a separate section in its “Religion” department for books on atheism. Does this mean that there are more atheists in the population or just that some atheists are becoming more outspoken? It is probably too early to tell, but in either case, the Christian is being presented with a disturbing, and quite far-reaching, clash with culture.

As the boundaries of scientific knowledge broaden, the more often we can expect to hear that science has made God unnecessary. In the minds of many, God was only a crude explanation by pre-scientific people for phenomena that we now know have natural explanations. And since science is now deemed to be the final arbiter of all truth, any conflict between the Bible and science is always resolved in favor of science. (In baseball, a tie goes to the runner; in philosophy, a tie always goes to science!) We don’t have the space here to go into the whole issue of science versus the Bible, but we should at least point out that the Christian should be prepared to experience this tension as a part of his clash with the culture. Those who come to science with anti-theistic

presuppositions are numerous and they are powerful. If they persuade the culture to view believers as unscientific, then Christians will just have to live with that stigma.

2. The Nature of God. As alarming as atheism may be, an even more alarming phenomenon is the number of people who believe in the existence of some kind of God but who conceive of him in ways that contradict the truth that he has revealed about himself. In this environment, the Christian is called upon to discuss not only God’s existence but also his *nature*. In other words, if God exists, what kind of God is he? Out of all the traits that God might possibly have had, what traits does he *actually* have? What are his real, objective attributes? And how do we know?

In contemporary culture, the main division is between those who conceive of God as a personal being and those who think of him as an impersonal force or power. Consistent as it is with the Eastern religions and with the worship of nature, the impersonal view of God is growing in popularity. We may live to see the time when it becomes the mainstream view of God. If so, those who believe God to be personal should be prepared to be even more out of step with the culture than we are now.

It is amazing how many people believe that they can think of God in whatever terms they wish. The trend is toward an eclectic approach

in which a person takes elements from various sources—Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.—and comes up with a “God” that has the set of characteristics they desire. Yet if God is an objective reality, we are not free to

It is amazing how many people believe that they can think of God in whatever terms they wish.... Yet if God is an objective reality, we are not free to think of him in any way that suits us.

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think of him in any way that suits us. He is whatever he is, and the sooner we find out the truth about his nature, the sooner we can begin rightly relating ourselves to that nature.

3. The Authority of God. In an individualistic age where people want, above all, to be free to do as they please, it should not be surprising that many pay little attention to the *authority* of God, that is, his sovereignty over his creation and his right to judge us and determine our eternal destiny. The prideful position of many today is reminiscent of the attitude reflected in Psalm 10: “The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts...He has said in his heart, ‘God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see’...He has said in his heart, ‘You will not require an account’” (vv. 4, 11, 13).

Today’s trend is toward independence and autonomy. Humanistic philosophy is proud of its denial of any power higher than man, and those who look to God for guidance and believe themselves to be accountable to him are seen as weak and psychologically unhealthy. A statement like Paul’s in 2 Corinthians 5:10 is seen as ridiculous: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

In this kind of culture, the Christian must be prepared to defend the dignity of a hierarchical creation in which the creatures find their highest good within the boundaries of the Creator’s will and respectfully submit themselves to the final judgment of their God.

4. The Worship of God. Today, the Christian finds himself clashing with the concept of *worship* that many people hold. Worship has come to be more about the worshiper than about God, and so we find in the culture a variety of worship “experiences” that can scarcely be distinguished from entertainment. As in their concept of God himself, people increasingly feel free to pick and choose when it comes to worship activities: from the practices that are “out there” in the religious marketplace, people select those that please them and leave off those that don’t. The complex fragmentation and division that we see going on in the world of so-called “Christendom” is in no small part the result of people’s insistence on worshiping in ways that meet their personal preference.

5. The Relevance of God. The last point at which the Christian clashes with the culture over God has to do with his *relevance* to daily life. Many people say they believe

in God, conceive of him in more or less truthful terms, acknowledge their accountability to him, and even worship him (occasionally) in a proper manner...but on most days, they just don’t deal with God in any kind of practical way. For the most part, he is irrelevant to the way they live their lives. They wouldn’t say they disbelieve him or dislike him; they just don’t desire him or take him very seriously.

Paul wrote of some “having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Tim. 3:5). This is what may be called “practical atheism,” and it is by far the most prevalent kind. Most of us know many, many people who say they believe in God but live *as if he did not*. For all the *practical difference* he makes in their lives, he may as well not exist. The time will come, of course, when they will realize the insulting way in which they have kept God at the margins of their lives, but by then it will be too late. For now, however, there are no atheists who are more at odds with true believers than these “practical atheists.” It was their kind of “believers” who had the Lord put to death.

There are no atheists who are more at odds with true believers than these “practical atheists.” It was their kind of “believers” who had the Lord put to death.

But if, as many suggest, we are seeing in contemporary culture a return to the paganism of the ancient world, that trend should arrest our attention and make us think about the relationship of the Christian to the world at large. If the persecution of Christians that characterized ancient paganism were to return, that would be a fearful prospect. Yet there might be some advantages to living in a world that more closely resembles the world that our first-century brethren lived in. It is not to the Christian’s advantage to live in “easy” times when there is little external resistance. As James points out, it is the *testing* of our faith that produces strength, and so we should “count it all joy” when we fall into “various trials” (1:2-4).

It is questionable whether the United States of America was ever a “Christian nation,” but it is certainly true that in the past a person could live a faithful life before God and not “stick out” as one does today. When society is at least nominally Christian, it may be hard to distinguish those who really love God from those who are just going through the motions. But when it becomes dangerous even to go

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through the motions, those whose main priority is to play it safe will sell out and dispense with the pretense of being a Christian. That will leave behind a group that is smaller in number—but larger in faith. Culture clashes, for all their disruption, do have the effect of clarifying who is on the Lord's side and who isn't, so we shouldn't see them as wholly unwelcome.

One thing to bear in mind is that in the first century, when the Christian concept of God was starkly different from that of the average person in the Roman Empire, the gospel grew more rapidly than it does in most places today. When the lines are clearly drawn between faith and non-faith, faith has a much better chance of being seen as *good news*. So from that vantage point, we should see today's clash over God as the opening of a door for evangelism that has not been very open during most of our lifetimes.

In conclusion, what steps can we take to *maintain* the Christian concept of God?

First, we must *understand* it. None of us knows as much about God as we need to know, and even what we do know is often tainted with inaccuracy. The Bible is, first and foremost, a book about God, and learning the truth about him ought to be our main reason for studying it. We ought to search the pages of Scripture diligently looking for anything we have not yet learned about God's character, his acts in history, and his will for his creatures. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that most of our problems in life stem from some misconception that we have about God. That being true, the most practical thing we can do is to work on increasing and purifying our understanding of what God is really like.

Second, we must be able to *defend* the Christian concept of God. Peter wrote to persecuted brethren in the first century, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). It is not enough to write off the unbelieving culture as a lost cause; we must learn how to engage unbelievers in

conversation about the gospel. Too few of us have taken the time to learn how to present the gospel effectively to those who don't share our basic convictions about the existence and nature of God. Rather than dismissing all unbelievers as being intellectually dishonest, we need to learn to make the case for the God of the Scriptures and trust that God will lead us to those honest souls who will do what the Thessalonians did: turn to God from idols "to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9).

And third, we must *live* the Christian concept of God. It is not enough to understand the truth about God, nor is it enough to be able to defend it. If our own lives are not *living examples* of what it means to be a true believer (1 Tim. 4:12), then our arguments will fall flat and not be heard by those who need to hear them. When we worry about the world's unwillingness to give God the honor he deserves, we would do well to hear God's words to Israel: "the nations shall know that I am the Lord," says the Lord God, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes" (Ezek. 36:23). We can hardly expect others to take God seriously if they can see that, for all our talk, we don't really do that ourselves. But when others can see that our reverence for God determines the making of even our most practical decisions, they will want to know more of the light that they see shining in us.

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New Church in Montrose, Colorado

A new congregation of Christians (San Juan church of Christ) has been started in Montrose, Colorado, a growing community of approximately 20,000 people. The church is small in number but is working diligently to grow as the whole counsel of God is presented publicly and privately.

Their meeting place is located at 1414 Hawk Parkway, Unit C (located right across highway 550 from Wal-Mart and next door to GNC in the Hawk Park Centre). Richard (Richie) Thetford is preaching for this newly established congregation.

Meeting Times

Sunday Morning Bible Classes..... 10:00 A.M.
Sunday Worship Service..... 11:00 A.M.
Wednesday Night Bible Study..... 6:30 P.M.

For more information please call (970) 626-5558. Additional information can be found on their web site at www.sanjuanchurchofchrist.org. Please plan on worshiping with them when you're traveling through the western slope of Colorado!

Submitted by Richie Thetford

a clash about Jesus

MARC W. GIBSON

“Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” This question asked by Jesus while he walked the earth (Matt. 16:13) is still as relevant and controversial today as it was then. Our modern society is deeply divided on the question of the person and significance of Jesus. From the Jesus Seminar to *The Da Vinci Code*, recent debates about Jesus’ historicity, teachings, miracles, and death have raged among religious and secular scholars, leaving the average person to wade through a confusing mass of divided opinions. In an internet poll on the question “Did Jesus really exist?” the highest percentage of votes favored the answer, “Maybe, maybe not. It’s possible, but not definite and there’s no way to know for sure.”¹ There is much uncertainty out there!

The ferocity observed in this clash is not surprising. Jesus was, and continues to be, the most important person to have ever lived. His recorded words and works stir both faith and fury. As our modern culture moves further into secularism and ungodliness, more people are increasingly offended by the biblical Jesus. What shall be done with Jesus – outright rejection or an adaptation to our times? Both choices create a clash between true believers and those who mold a Jesus according to their own human wisdom.

A Divided Jesus

For over a century, Jesus has been divided by modernistic scholars into the *Jesus of history* and the *Christ of faith*. We are told that the Jesus of history is the actual person revealed by the facts of history, while the Christ of faith is the story that was invented about this person that includes a virgin birth, miracle working, and the resurrection from the dead. The clear implication is that one can only be certain of a few facts about the Jesus of history, and should reject as mythical the stories about the Christ of faith. If one is to believe the Christ of faith, he must make a “leap of faith” into the realm of the irrational.²

This divide remains as the basis of virtually every modern reinvention of Jesus.³ The effort is to separate Jesus as a human teacher/sage from the idea that he was the anointed Son of God who embodied and demonstrated divine power. This divide has been noted as the difference between the

stories of *Christianity* and *Jesusanity*:

Both of these stories afford Jesus a great deal of respect, but they are very different stories in regard to his importance. In one, Jesus is worshipped. In the other, he is simply respected. In one, he is intimately associated with God. In the other, he points to God. In one, he is the Way. In the other, he shows the way. We cannot understand the public discussion about Jesus without understanding that the discussion entails these two distinct stories.⁴

The Reinventions of Jesus

Jesus has been reinvented into various forms. He has been presented as an eschatological prophet for Israel (E. P. Sanders), a Hellenized cynic sage (Burton Mack), an Elijah-like prophet of social change (Richard Horsley), a spiritual social visionary (Marcus Borg), a marginal Jew (John P. Meier), and a Jewish cynic peasant with an alternative social vision (John Dominic Crossan).⁵ The common thread in all of these reinventions is that Jesus is *not* the unique Messiah of God, but simply an enlightened teacher and social visionary who challenged the elitist thinking of his day to lead men to a more spiritual outlook about God and one another.

This is not unlike the various answers the disciples gave Jesus to his question. They said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets” (Matt. 16:14). Jesus was seen as simply another prophet. He did not fulfill the popular conception of the Messiah. Many still refuse to identify him as the Messiah today. But, regardless of what some men say, each one must answer for himself the question of Jesus, “But who do you say that I am?” (v. 15).

The Battleground Issues

There are particular issues over which the clash about Jesus has been fought. The following will be discussed in this article:

1. The Integrity of the Text of Scripture

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A Clash About Jesus

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2. Alternate Gospels

3. The True Message of Jesus

4. The Nature of Faith

The Integrity of the Text of Scripture

Our knowledge about Jesus is derived from the gospel accounts found in the Bible. It comes as no surprise that the integrity of these accounts is called into question by those who reject the truth about Jesus found there. The Jesus Seminar declared that “we will never be able to claim certain knowledge of exactly what the original text of any biblical writing was.”⁶ Bart Ehrman, a trained textual critic, has produced recent works casting doubt on the integrity of the text of Scripture.⁷

A massive amount of manuscript evidence continues to speak today as a powerful witness to the integrity of the biblical text. This evidence is both earlier than possessed by any other document of ancient origin, and is of greater quantity. Further evidence from translated versions, papyrus fragments, and the church fathers confirm the fact that our text has been delivered to us with unparalleled accuracy. Where differences do exist between manuscripts, they are so minor and the reasons so apparent that the integrity of the text has never been in serious question.⁸ The knowledge about Jesus is recorded and handed down in accurate, trustworthy historical accounts.

Alternative Gospels

The existence of “alternative” gospels and doctrines is no shock to the student of the Bible. False gospels and doctrines were circulating in the days of the apostles (2 Thess. 2:2; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 7). Recent emphasis has been given to the Gnostic Gospels (of the Nag Hammadi literature), such as the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Judas, the latter giving a radically different view of the relationship between Jesus and Judas.⁹ The recent *Da Vinci Code* novel/movie and the *Lost Tomb of Jesus* documentary have raised questions about an alleged relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene.¹⁰

The gospel accounts in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) give a unified record of the life and teachings of Jesus. Characteristics of the Gnostic heresy involved denying the truth that Jesus came in the flesh, which the apostle John identified as “antichrist” (1 John 2:18-23; 4:3; 2 John 7). The so-called “alternative gospels,” which arose after the time of the apostles (2nd – 3rd

century AD), are contrary to the inspired gospel of Christ once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). They present heretical teachings and should be rejected as false. The apostle Paul warned that a different gospel is not just “another” gospel, but is an effort to “pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:6-7).

The True Message of Jesus

The message of Jesus is central to understanding who Jesus was. He has been portrayed as an itinerate sage, a prophet of social renewal and hope. This brings Jesus down to the level of a simple teacher and leader of men, not the Messiah who is the exclusive hope and salvation of all mankind.

As the people who heard Jesus quickly found out, Jesus brought a message far greater than a simple prophet or sage. He spoke as one “having authority” (Matt. 7:29). He did not just point to the way, but he claimed, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Spiritual salvation can only be known through him and his words (John 8:31-32). Jesus came to provide grace and truth through himself as the Christ (John 1:17). He is the “I Am,” he who was in the beginning with God and is God (John 8:58; 1:1). This is the Jesus many wish to erase from history, along with his call for all to follow him for salvation (Matt. 11:28-30).

The Nature of Faith

The depiction of Bible faith as an irrational “leap in the dark” is unfortunate and false. Jesus himself warned about the dangers of a “blind” faith that is not founded in the truth (Matt. 15:14). No one in the Bible ever suggested that man close his eyes and believe contrary to the truth. The truth about Jesus is believable because of the public testimony of witnesses and the inspired Scriptures (John 5:31-39; 20:24-29).

The apostle John was an eyewitness to Jesus’ miracles and recorded them so that we “may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,

No one in the Bible ever suggested that man close his eyes and believe contrary to the truth. The truth about Jesus is believable because of the public testimony of witnesses and the inspired Scriptures.

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and that believing you have life in his name” (John 20:30-31). Faith in Jesus as the Christ is not based on “cunningly devised fables” but on eyewitness testimony that has been preserved in writing (2 Pet. 1:16-19). All efforts today to reinvent Jesus as something less than the Christ are attempts of Satan to undercut our faith in the word of God. Our faith and joy stand solid in the testimony of those who saw and heard (1 John 1:1-4).

Does it really matter what we believe about Jesus? Can we not pick and choose what we want him to be, and make him sort of an “everyman” for everyone? This is the insidious end that Satan knows will result from the clash over Jesus if the unbelievers, skeptics, and liberal scholars have their way. New Age thinking has molded Jesus into a forerunner of spiritual enlightenment; Eastern religions consider him a grand religious teacher; Islam places him in a long line of religious prophets. The Christian knows that Jesus cannot be defined however man desires. The Father has made him both “Lord

and Christ,” the Master and Savior of all men (Acts 2:36). His words and works were confirmed by miracles, signs, and wonders (Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3-4), and he is God’s Prophet, High Priest, and King of kings. His enemies could

His enemies could do nothing but seek his death. The enemies of truth today seek the same as they attempt to strip him of his deity and lordship to crucify him on the modern crosses of skepticism and unbelief.

do nothing but seek his death. The enemies of truth today seek the same as they attempt to strip him of his deity and lordship to crucify him on the modern crosses of skepticism and unbelief. Their efforts will be shown as vain and wicked in the last day (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Conclusion

The cultural clash over Jesus has eternal consequences. Our world needed a Savior, and the Father sent Jesus to be the sacrifice for our sins. This Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). Satan, through his willing ministers, is furiously attacking this great truth about Jesus that brings faith and hope to men trapped in sin. The battle rages on and the lines are drawn. As his people today, let us

“stand up” for Jesus now so that we may rejoice in him in the final day!

For if we died with him, we shall also live with him. If we endure, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us. If we are faithless, he remains faithful; he cannot deny himself. (2 Tim. 2:11-13).

For further reading:

Dethroning Jesus: Exposing Popular Culture’s Quest to Unseat the Biblical Christ, Darrell L. Bock & Daniel B. Wallace

The Case for the Real Jesus, Lee Strobel

The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth, Ben Witherington III

The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ, Gary R. Habermas

Jesus Under Fire, ed. Michael J. Wilkins, J. P. Moreland

Hidden Gospels: How the Search For Jesus Lost Its Way, Philip Jenkins

Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up? ed. Paul Copan

Endnotes

¹http://atheism.about.com/gi/pages/poll.htm?poll_id=6793870036&linkback=http://atheism.about.com/b/2007/12/20/daily-poll-did-jesus-really-exist.htm

²The influence of Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) led to this idea of a religious “leap of faith.” His existential philosophy created an “upper story” (non-rational) and “lower story” (rational) of knowledge that could not be united. This philosophy was popularized in religion mainly by Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976) and his methodology of demythologization. The divided Jesus looks like this:

Christ of faith (non-rational)

Jesus of history (rational)

A good review of this philosophy is found in Francis A. Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason*, 1968.

³The present debates over Jesus have been called the “Third Quest” for the historical Jesus, that is, the third major effort in the last two hundred years by various scholars, liberal and conservative, to investigate the truth claims about Jesus (see *The Jesus Quest*, Ben Witherington III).

⁴Darrell L. Bock & Daniel B. Wallace, *Dethroning Jesus: Exposing Popular Culture’s Quest to Unseat the Biblical Christ*, 5.

⁵*Ibid.*, 6-12; see also *The Jesus Quest*, Ben Witherington III.

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⁶*The Five Gospels*, Funk, Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, 1993, 6. The Jesus Seminar, so-called, was a large group of scholars who met and voted on what Jesus “really” said. When completed, they determined that Jesus did *not* actually speak 82% of the words ascribed to him in the gospel accounts.

⁷*Misquoting Jesus* (HarperOne, 2005) and *Lost Christianities* (Oxford, 2005).

⁸An excellent work thoroughly discussing all of these issues is Neil R. Lightfoot’s *How We Got the Bible* (Baker, 2003). It can be adapted as a textbook for class study.

⁹For the views of liberal scholarship, see recent works by Bart Ehrman and Elaine Pagels. For an evangelical examination of the

Gnostic gospels, see Darrell L. Bock, *The Missing Gospels* (Nelson, 2006).

¹⁰*The Da Vinci Code* is a novel (2003) by Dan Brown that was made into a movie (2006). It was about an alleged conspiracy in the Catholic Church that concealed the knowledge that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, who supposedly was portrayed in Leonardo da Vinci’s painting of the Last Supper. *The Lost Tomb of Jesus* book and documentary by Simcha Jacobovici (2007) also suggested that Jesus and Mary were married and then buried together in a family tomb in Jerusalem. Scholars, liberal and conservative, have exposed the many problems and inconsistencies in both of these efforts to exploit “alternative” theories about Jesus.

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June 23-26, 2008 • Bowling Green, Kentucky

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:00 - 8:50	<i>In the Beginning Was the Word</i> (John 1:1) Anthony Genton	<i>The Work of the Spirit</i> (John 16:7-14) Bruce Reeves	<i>Preach The Word</i> (2 Tim. 4:1-5) Norman Fultz
9:00 - 9:50 A	<i>Come Unto Me</i> (Matt. 11:28) Adonis Bailey	<i>Contend Earnestly For The Faith</i> (Jude 3) Bobby Holmes	<i>Blessed Are The Dead Who Die in the Lord</i> (Rev. 14:13) Lewis Willis
9:00 - 9:50 B	<i>The Unity of the Spirit</i> (Eph. 4:1-7) Wayne Seaton	<i>Receive Ye One Another</i> (Rom. 15:7) Jeremy Sweets	<i>Whosoever Divorces His Wife</i> (Matt. 19:9) Andy Alexander
10:00 - 10:50 A	<i>The Word of God Is Living and Powerful</i> (Heb. 4:12) Mike Grushon	<i>True Worship</i> (John 4:24) Andy Diestelkamp	<i>Bring Up Your Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord</i> (Eph. 6:1-4) Royce DeBerry
10:00 - 10:50 B	<i>Works of the Flesh: Sensuality</i> (Gal. 5:19) Gale Towles	<i>Works of the Flesh: Sins Against Brethren</i> (Gal. 5:20-21) Ron Halbrook	<i>Love</i> (1 Cor. 13) Rick Liggin
11:00 - 11:50 A	<i>Strangers and Pilgrims</i> (Heb. 11:13-16) David Halbrook	<i>Upon This Rock I Will Build My Church</i> (Matt. 16:13-19) Brian Anderson	<i>Without Faith It Is Impossible To Please Him</i> (Heb. 11:6) Phil Martin
11:00 - 11:50 B	<i>Daughters of Sarah</i> Carla Adams	<i>Eunice and Lois</i> Marilyn Curtis	<i>Euodia and Syntyche</i> Bonnie Gary
Lunch Break			
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Open Forum: <i>Must We Divide Over Every Issue?</i>		Open Forum
Singing 7:00 - 7:30 p.m.			
<i>God So Loved The World</i> (John 3:16) Mike Willis	<i>Go Ye Into All The World</i> (Mark 16:15-16) Connie W. Adams	Singing	<i>More Than Conquerors</i> (Rom. 8:37) Steve Monts



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Daniel H. King, Sr.

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This author did his undergraduate work at Wayne State University and David Lipscomb College (B.A., 1970). Graduate studies were taken at the Harding Graduate School of Religion (M.A., 1972) and Vanderbilt University (PhD., 1982). He has written several other books and has published numerous articles on biblical themes.



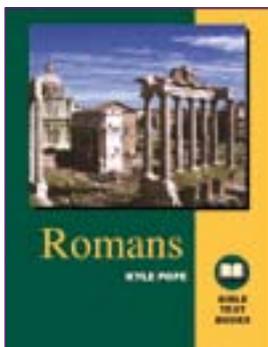
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Bobby K. Thompson

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The author has been preaching for over 55 years. He has preached all over the United States. His published works include *Christian Attitudes*, two-volume lesson books, seven volumes of sermons for flannel board, and nine volumes of fifty-two sermon outlines for making transparencies.

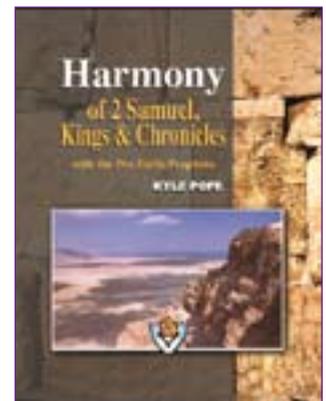


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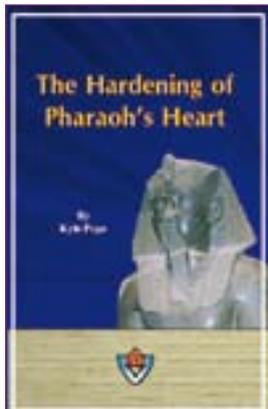


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by Kyle Pope

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a clash about the Bible



MIKE WILLIS

The Christian faith presents a world view that has clashed with the models devised by man since its beginning. Certainly the world view of the Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian philosophers did not coincide with that presented in the New Testament. Our age is not unique in addressing the issue of two world views in conflict.

The Christian world view dominated American society from its inception until the 1960s when a major social upheaval threw aside the Christian world view in favor of a humanist (atheistic) world view. The upheavals this created in morals has been presented by many capable men, including Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork in *Slouching Toward Sodom*. A secular movement developed in America, which was already well developed in continental Europe. This social movement rejected the perspective of Christianity and presented a world view with the assumption that there is no God or that he is inactive in this universe. The result has been that America is now described as a post-Christian society. Naturally, the doctrinal

presuppositions of this movement have ramifications that affect many different basic Christian doctrines and ethical issues. My assignment is to discuss the clash of these two radically different cultures with reference to their respective understandings of the Bible.

My article will give a brief description of the two *a priori*, underlying presuppositions of the academic study of the Bible. Then it will contrast the different concepts of the Bible presented by Christianity and by the academic study of the Bible in post-Christian America. The purpose of this article is to make Christians aware of the cultural clash which is occurring in America with reference to the Bible.

A Priori Methodology Decisions (1): The Exclusion of the Miraculous

The modern view of the world denies the existence of God and, therefore, the possibility of the miraculous. In *A Secular Humanist Declaration* endorsed by fifty-eight prominent humanists, the humanist view of religion and the Bible is given:

As secular humanists, we are generally skeptical about supernatural claims. We recognize the importance of religious experience: that experience that redirects and gives meaning to the lives of human beings. We deny, however, that such experiences have anything to do with the supernatural. We are doubtful of traditional views of God and divinity...we find that traditional views of the existence of God either are meaningless, have not been demonstrated to be true, or are tyrannically exploitation. Secular humanists may be agnostics, atheists, rationalists, or skeptics, but they find insufficient evidence for the claim that some divine purpose exists for the universe. They reject the idea that God has intervened miraculously in history or revealed himself to a chosen few, or that he can save or redeem sinners (17-18).

Obviously, those with this world view must of necessity have a different view of the Bible than is presented in the Scriptures themselves.

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The modern academic approach to the Bible is based on German rationalism which excluded the miraculous from its approach to the Bible. Typical of this methodology is the highly respected and ground-breaking work of David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874) entitled *The Life of Christ Critically Examined*. Strauss' work was revolutionary in its impact, reshaping the study of the life of Christ in his day and having a lingering effect which continues even to this day. Many of his contemporaries took a deistic world view, in which God created the world, and then left it as if it were a wound-up clock to run down. They tried to give a rationalist explanation of those miracles that appear in Scripture. Strauss rejected their rationalist explanations and interpreted the miracles as myth. He held the position that God does not intervene in the affairs of this world. He asserted that the unenlightened ancient world, not understanding the world as 19th century scientists did, saw God's hand in everything. He explains his own basis for his approach to the life of Christ, in the following quotation:

Nevertheless the totality of finite things forms a vast circle, which, except that it owes its existence and laws to a superior power, suffers no intrusion from without. This conviction is so much a habit of thought with the modern world, that in actual life, the belief in a supernatural manifestation, an immediate divine agency, it at once attributed to ignorance or imposture. It has been carried to the extreme in that modern explanation, which, in a spirit exactly opposed to that of the Bible, has either totally removed the divine causation, or has so far restricted it that it is immediate in the act of creation alone, but mediate from that point onwards; —i.e., God operates on the world only in so far as he gave to it this fixed direction at the creation. From this point of view, at which nature and history appear as a compact tissue of finite causes and effects, it was impossible to regard the narratives of the Bible, in which this tissue is broken by innumerable instances of divine interference, as historical.

He continued,

...The supernaturalists indeed claim an exception from this type on behalf of the biblical history; a presupposition which is inadmissible from our point of view, according to which the same laws, although varied by various circumstances, are supreme in every sphere of being and action, and therefore every narrative which offends against these laws, is to be recognized as so far unhistorical (78, 80).

The result for Strauss was a life of Jesus in which the miraculous was excluded. This resulted in the astounding

conclusion that the historical Jesus (a Jesus who performed no miracles and taught what he taught without divine revelation) was different from the Christ of faith!

That Strauss' approach was not unique is confirmed by the contemporary highly respected New Testament scholar, Bart D. Ehrman. In his *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, Ehrman explains the historical problem which miracles present to the mind of the modernist.. He states that one can never know for certain anything in ancient history. What one can do is establish probability—that is, there is a very high probability that a given event did or did not occur. In an excursus entitled “The Historian and the Problem of Miracle,” Ehrman says,

If accepting the occurrence of a miracle requires belief in the supernatural realm, and historians by the very nature of their craft can speak only about events of the natural world (which are accessible to observers of every kind) how can they ever certify the occurrence of a miracle? (198).

He then follows David Hume's argument against miracles. Here is the way he reasons. The common experience of men testifies that dead people are not raised back to life. No amount of human testimony that a given individual was raised from the dead can outnumber the testimony of all the others to the effect that dead people do not come back to life under ordinary circumstances. Therefore, it is very improbable that Jesus was raised from the dead. Ehrman's argument is this:

As events that defy all probability, however, miracles do not happen all the time. Thus they create an inescapable problem for historians. Since historians can only establish what probably happened in the past, and the chances of a miracle happening, by definition, are infinitesimally remote, they can never demonstrate that a miracle *probably* happened (200).

Ehrman continues,

I should emphasize that historians do not have to deny the possibility of miracles or deny that miracles have actually happened in the past. Many historians, for example, committed Christians, observant Jews, and practicing Muslims, believe that they have in fact happened. When they think or say this, however, they do so not in the capacity of the historian but in the capacity of the believer (201).

These quotations give one a picture of the different point of view that has developed over recent generations in Europe

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and the Americas about the Bible. Excluding the miraculous, one has a totally different view of the Bible. And this view is presented as the “objective” or “academic” approach to the Bible which modern enlightened people have in contrast to the supposedly unenlightened, fanatical, and ignorant approach to the Bible which fundamentalists have.

Can One Exclude the Miraculous?

The decision to exclude the miraculous from consideration as a possibility is not based on historical evidence but upon philosophical presuppositions. The secular humanistic or atheistic approach to the Bible begins with the *a priori* premise that there is no supernatural

The secular humanistic or atheistic approach to the Bible begins with the a priori premise that there is no supernatural being and that miracles cannot occur. That is to say, God is ruled out of the equation from the outset. The “scientific” or “academic” approach to the study of Scripture portrays itself

as objective, as interpreting the evidence without a bias. However, the “scientific” scholar is just as insistent on fitting the Bible into a presupposed world view as he claims the Christian is guilty of. The only difference is perspective, or starting-point. In fact, from the beginning he rejects the supernatural and denies the uniqueness of the Christian religion. So, he is just as beset by presuppositions as is any “fundamentalist” who fits the Bible into his own world view. There is no absolute objectivity except with God, the elitist claims to the contrary by the so-called “scientific” academicians notwithstanding.

The historical method used by those engaged in the academic study of Scripture includes the presupposition that history is a unity, in the sense of a closed continuum of effects, in which individual events are connected by a succession of cause and effect events. This continuum cannot be interfered with by supernatural, transcendent powers. Therefore, no miracles are possible or even conceivable.

The argument used against miracles is in fact a clear case of circular reasoning. It argues that the absolutely uniform experience of mankind is against miracles. However, who can know the totality of human experience? Only a being endowed with omniscience and omnipresence would have at his disposal such broad knowledge. In other words, only a God could know that. But no human has ever enjoyed that level of knowledge. The argument of the skeptic, then, is simply this: “If miracles are impossible, then the report of any miraculous event must be false because miracles are impossible.” This presupposition allows one to dismiss any report of a miracle without objectively and carefully examining the historical testimony of those who claim to have seen a miracle, such as the witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus.

The modern “scientific” approach to the study of Scripture portrays itself as having irrefutable evidence that discredits the Bible, whereas in reality the scientific approach makes an *a priori* assumption that precludes the need even to examine the evidence. The reader can easily see that this approach is in reality very unscientific.

A Priori Methodological Decisions (2): Giving Archaeology Precedence Over The Literary Text

Before the 1970s, biblical scholars typically relied on the text of Scripture to write a history of Israel. In more recent years, the history of Israel studies have virtually dismissed anything that is found in the biblical narrative, except what can be shown to be true from archaeological discoveries, although all scholars acknowledge that neither the biblical nor history drawn from Near Eastern remains is exhaustive. Radical scholars have rejected the idea that the biblical narrative is historical and concluded that the biblical narratives are a late invention of the Persian and Hellenistic period by those who were writing novels and political and/or religious propaganda. Their approach is based on an *a priori* decision about what kind of evidence should be given priority—the literary (Bible) or archaeology. What is new is the giving of priority to archaeological evidence over textual evidence; indeed, if a literary (biblical) event is not confirmed archaeologically, it did not occur, according to their reasoning.

The decision to give archaeological evidence priority eliminates the early history of Israel. Not one of the

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characters in Genesis can be confirmed by external archaeological evidence. Therefore, the historicity of the patriarchs is denied and the entire Genesis narrative is treated as folklore and legend (watch for such words as “saga,” “eponymous,” “folk etymologies,” “aetologies,” and “anachronisms”). J. Van Seters wrote that the Genesis “tradition as it stands reflects only a rather late date of composition and gives no hint of its content of any great antiquity, in terms of biblical history” (*Abraham in History and Tradition*, 122). The common belief is that the Genesis narratives are composite in nature, coming from the monarchic period and hence reflecting the milieu of the tenth century (some would say they come from the exilic period and reflect the milieu of the sixth or fifth century). The conclusion is that biblical history is a literary product whose primary goal is not to give a record of what actually happened but to shape an ideology and faith; therefore, it cannot be regarded as history. For such people, there is nothing known about early Israelite history before the divided kingdom and, as a consequence, the patriarchal narratives, the sojourn in Egypt, the Exodus, the wilderness wanderings, and the period of the judges are treated as unhistorical accounts. To postmodernists, they are the folklore used for nation building.

Written records usually take precedence over archaeological finds which must be identified, catalogued, put into a chronological setting, and then interpreted. Usually an ancient text is accepted as a record of the setting the text claims for itself, but the biblical narrative is treated differently. The setting it claims for itself is rejected. A

“verification text” is necessary for a biblical narrative and the standard of “verification” is such that no number of incidental verifications can give credence to the text as a whole, though that verification requirement is not required of other ancient texts.

The fact is that historians are not even-handed when they examine ancient texts. For example, the Assyrian invasions are recorded for various emperors, from which I have chosen to look at the campaigns against Egypt, Syria, and Palestine by Ashurbanipal (668-663 B.C.). The Assyrian records are highly respected, although they admittedly contain political and religious propaganda which “propaganda” in the Bible renders its accounts unreliable. Ashurbanipal reports the rebellion against his rule:

An express messenger came to Nineveh to report to me. I became very angry on account of these happenings, my soul was aflame. I lifted up my hands, prayed to Ashur and to the Assyrian Ishtar...(ANET, 294).

From the outset, the rebellion is laid before the goddess Ishtar, much as Hezekiah presented the problem of the Assyrian invasion to Yahweh (Jehovah). When Ashurbanipal explains his victory, he said,

Tirhakah heard in Memphis of the defeat of his army (and) he (terror-inspiring) splendor of Ashur and Ishtar blinded (lit: overwhelmed) him (thus) that he became like a madman. The glamor of my kingdom with which the gods of heaven and nether world have endowed me, dazzled him and he left Memphis and fled, to save his life, into the town Ni’ (Thebes) (ANET, 294).

Similar statements that attribute Israel’s military conquests to Yahweh in Israel’s documents means that the reported events are not historical, but Assyrian documents are not treated the same way. They are given historical credibility even when they cannot be verified independently and even when they speak of the gods operating in the affairs of men, even miraculously! This leads one to the conclusion that there is a bias against the Bible.

The academic study of the Bible portrays itself as an unbiased and objective presentation of the historical facts but in truth it is a study of the Bible which treats

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biblical materials differently than it treats other ancient documents. It is biased against the Bible.

A Different Bible

Because the miraculous is excluded and any historical event not confirmed by archaeology is rejected as historical, the scientific study of the Bible teaches a different concept of the Bible than is presented by Scripture itself. The Bible portrays itself as having been written under the inspiration of God. Peter said, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:20-21). The authors of the Bible are presented as writing what the Spirit of God revealed to them. Hebrews 3:7 quotes from Psalm 95:7 saying that "the Holy Ghost saith...." In chapter four, he quotes the same psalm and calls it the word of God (4:3; cf. Ps. 95:11). In 4:7 he has God speaking "in David." The words of Jeremiah (31:33) are the words of the Holy Ghost (cf. Heb. 10:15). Paul summarized the doctrine of inspiration saying, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Because he denies the miraculous, the "scientific"

student of the Bible must explain the Bible differently. Here are the characteristics of the Bible according to the post-Christian world view:

1. The Bible of post-Christian America is written by mere unaided men, it is not a revelation from God. The Christian view of the Bible is that it is a revelation of the mind of God to man. Paul said, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost

The Bible is a record of God's gracious acts to save mankind from sin. But the Bible of post-Christian America is a record of man's blind groping to find God and to know him.

teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:12-13). The Bible is a record of God's gracious acts to save mankind from sin. But the Bible of post-Christian America is a record of man's blind groping to find God and to know him.

2. The Bible of post-Christian America contains all sorts of contradictions. Because Christians believe that the Bible is a revelation from God, they believe that what the Bible teaches in one place harmonizes with what the Bible teaches in all other parts of the Bible. However, atheistic or "scientific" students of the Bible pit the writings of one author against what is said in other places. In New Testament studies, the incident between Paul and Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14) is interpreted, not as a moral slip by a great man, but as evidence of two doctrinal sects within the first century that were at war with each other. Paul is seen as a representative of an "anti-Jewish" sect that broke Christianity away from its Jewish roots whereas Peter is seen as representative of a Jewish group who tried to keep Christianity as a Jewish sect.

What the author of Leviticus wrote about the sacrificial system is pitted against the prophets condemnation of ritualism (1 Sam. 15:22; Ps. 50:8-9; Prov. 21:3; Eccl. 5:1; Isa. 1:11; Jer. 22:16; Hos. 4:6; 6:6; Amos 5:21-23). Luke's accounts of the resurrection appearance to Saul of Tarsus are pitted against one another (for example, one says that those who accompanied Saul heard the voice but did not see the Lord [9:7] whereas the other says they did not hear the voice of him that spake [22:9]). Paul's brief summary of his travels shortly after his conversion in Galatians 1:17-24 is pitted against Luke's account of Paul's early travels in Acts; the Lukan account of the so-called Jerusalem conference in Acts 15 is pitted against the Pauline account in Galatians 2:1-11 to prove contradictions exist in the Bible. These and other comparable techniques attempt to destroy the unity of the Bible and establish the credibility of critical methods in dealing with biblical literature.

3. The Bible of post-Christian America is not historical, but is filled with examples of folklore, legend, and myth as important elements of its content. The issue here is whether or not the biblical narrative is historical. By their *a priori* acceptance of the premise that miracles do not

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occur, the “scientific” approach to the study of the Bible reduces any narrative that speaks of a miracle to non-history status. The narrative of the parting of the waters of the Red Sea so that Israel could cross on dry land (Exod. 14), the miraculous conquest of Jericho (Josh. 6), the sun standing still during the conquest of Gibeon (Josh. 10:12), the story of Jonah being swallowed by a large fish, etc. are considered by these readers as legends and folklore. But Peter was emphatic in saying that, when he preached the deity and resurrection of Christ, he was not following “cunningly devised fables.” He said, “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet. 1:16). The modern approach to the Bible is that even the non-miraculous events that cannot be confirmed by external sources cannot be given historical acceptance.

The *a priori* decision to treat as unhistorical anything not confirmed by archaeological finds eliminates even non-miraculous accounts as untrustworthy. As a result the Bible is a “faith document” but has no historical value. A postmodernism deconstructionism has asserted that texts have no intrinsic meaning; they are all subject to interpretation which is subjective and relative. The result is that one cannot trust any of the historical narratives in the Bible. To postmodernist scholars, the Hebrew Bible is a document that reflects late (some say as late the second century B.C.) understandings of Israel’s history. By studying the biblical traditions, one can learn some things about the community from which they originated, but hardly anything at all about the history they purport to report. The Bible records are not to be believed unless they can be confirmed by archaeology or other texts outside the Bible. The modern efforts to rewrite the history of Israel are carried out by those who believe that the earliest history of Israel that one can confidently know dates to the divided kingdom period. All history before that is essentially myth that was used as religious or political propaganda for the purpose of nation building. The narrative of Joseph in Egypt, the Exodus, the wilderness wandering, the conquest, the period of the judges, and the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon are not genuine history, but fundamentally little else than folklore and myth. The story of David fighting Goliath should be understood as one understands the story of George Washington

chopping down the cherry tree. Such texts are to be read as fictional stories. The 1-2 Samuel narrative must be understood as political propaganda circulated by the Davidic faction in late Israelite society to justify the Davidic dynasty. Lately even modernist scholars who believe that the biblical narrative does contain folklore, legend, and myth are awakening to the fact that things are out of hand. Some are now finally saying that the post-modern deconstructionists have gone too far (see for example, W.G. Dever’s book, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It?*).

4. The Bible of post-Christian America does not contain prophecy. The Christian’s perspective is that the Holy Spirit enabled men to write prophetic utterances which they themselves could not understand. Peter said, “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into” (1 Pet. 1:10-12). Because the Holy Spirit inspired them, prophets

foretold events which came to pass well after their own time. The seventh century B.C. prophet Isaiah foretold the suffering of Israel’s Messiah (53), his virgin birth (7:14), his deity (9:6), his miracles (35), etc. He foretold the coming of King Cyrus to restore the children of Israel to their homeland. Moses, the author of Genesis, who lived in the fifteenth century B.C., foretold the scattering of the tribes of Simeon and Levi (49:7) as well as the rising up of one of Judah’s descendants to establish a lineage of rulers (49:10).

How does one explain the presence of prophecies in the Bible? The solution of the destructive critic is to date the authorship of those books after the event.

How does one explain the presence of these prophecies

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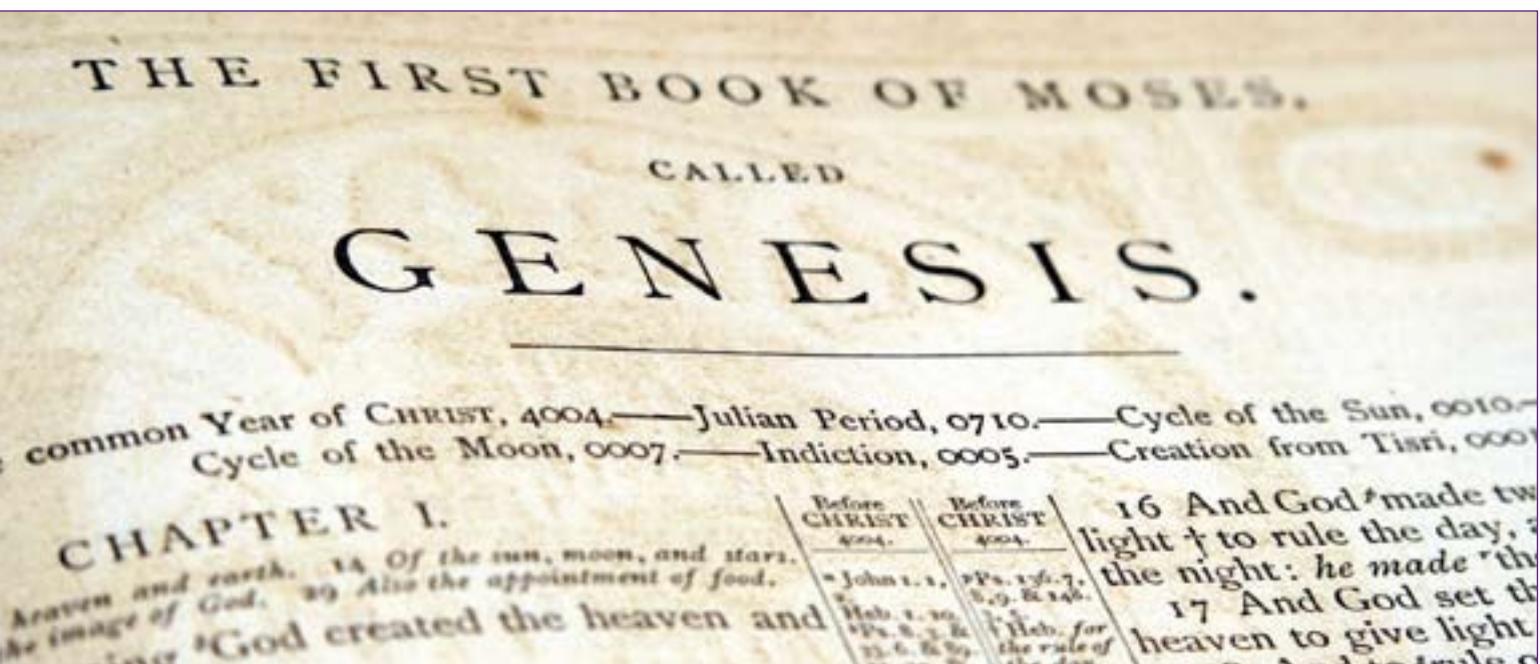
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in the Bible? The solution of the destructive critic is to date the authorship of those books after the event. The book of Isaiah, for example, is divided into at least three parts. There is one section that was written by First Isaiah (1-39) whose contextual background was the Assyrian conflict of the seventh century B.C.; another section (40-55) was written by Deutero-Isaiah, or Second Isaiah, whose background was post-exilic; the final section (56-66) was written by Third Isaiah perhaps during the time of Ezra-Nehemiah or Haggai and Zechariah. To believe in the unity of Isaiah is impossible because a seventh century B.C. prophet could not possibly foretell the events in the life of Israel that happened two centuries later! And, even this late dating is inadequate to explain the messianic prophecies. To explain them one must reinterpret messianic prophecies to give them an interpretation relevant to the age in which the prophet lived. (One cannot date the book after Christ because copies of the book written before the coming of Jesus still exist.)

5. **The Bible of post-Christian America does not believe the Pentateuch was written by Moses.** The authorship of the book of Genesis in particular has long been disputed. Early rationalists made arguments to deny that Moses wrote the book of Genesis that are no longer accepted because archaeology has proven them false (for example, men could not write at that early time). Based on the difference between the usage of the names of God in

the book, liberal scholars developed a theory of the authorship of Genesis, abbreviated by JEDP, that stated that an unknown redactor compiled the book from several different sources. One source, called J, reflects a Judean background and predominately uses the name Yahweh (or Jehovah) for God. This writer relied on oral traditions that had long been passed down through the generations before him. He wrote in the early days of the Israelite monarchy (10-9th century B.C.). The second source is commonly designated E because it uses the Hebrew word *Elohim* for God; this document is thought to reflect a Israel bias against Judah and was written after the division of the nation, probably in the mid-eighth century B.C. A third source, P, is incorporated into the book; its main contribution is genealogies, though some narratives are also drawn from this source. The source is designated P because it reflects a priestly slant (the practices of Sabbath observance, concern about clean and unclean animals in the creation and flood narratives, etc.). This source may date as late as the fifth century B.C. Some scholars also add a D source that reflects Deuteronomistic backgrounds of the Josianic reforms of the seventh century B.C. Less important other sources also were used when they were put together by a post-exilic redactor who loosely compiled the book of Genesis in its present form. This scheme was worked out by K.H. Graf (1815-1869) and Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) and refined by subsequent scholars. For over one

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hundred years, this approach dominated Pentateuch research. In recent years, this view has been challenged by several academic scholars (not Evangelical or Fundamentalist), such as Umberto Cassuto, Thomas L. Thompson, R. N. Whybray, and others.

The conclusions drawn from the JEDP theory are as follows:

- Moses is not the author of the Pentateuch as attested throughout both the Old and New Testaments
- The men and women described in Genesis were not historical figures
- The events in the early history of the earth (Gen. 1-11) did not happen
- The Pentateuch does not give an accurate history of the time it describes (the Exodus and Wilderness Wanderings)
- God did not reveal himself to the ancestors of Israel
- The Tabernacle never existed; it was invented to sanctify the Temple in Jerusalem

The JEDP theory of the authorship of the Pentateuch encouraged others to deny the stated or traditional authors of most other Bible books (note earlier mention of the First, Second, and Third Isaiah).

The Pulpit for The Post-Christian American View of the Bible

Make no mistake about the evangelistic zeal of the proponents of this iconoclastic and altogether different view of the Bible. They are as rabid in the proclamation of their theory as any fundamentalist preacher. But their presentation has a much more sophisticated “air” about it and at least the appearance of being “scientific.” Their pulpits are the college campus, divinity school, theological seminary, and the TV.

The “scientific” study of religion and its view of the Bible is the standard presentation on the college campus. With rare exceptions, anyone who takes a college course in state supported institutions on the introduction to the Old Testament or introduction to the New Testament will be taught the approach to the Bible presented above. Though there are many academically qualified professors in biblical studies who hold an Evangelical view of the Bible, most of them cannot find a teaching post in a state

supported institution and are forced to teach at colleges and universities supported by private funds. The same could be said about other disciplines. One cannot teach science in most state universities if he is vocal in his denial of evolution.

Not only is the post-Christian American view of the Bible taught in state supported universities, this is also the view of the Bible presented in most seminaries run by the historic denominations in the United States. These seminaries have trained their “pastors” to believe that the Bible is not historically accurate and that miracles did not in fact occur. The mainline churches do not believe the Bible! Churches which disagree are usually denigrated as radical, fundamentalist sects who are generally characterized by bigotry and ignorance.

Seminaries have trained their “pastors” to believe that the Bible is not historically accurate and that miracles did not in fact occur. The mainline churches do not believe the Bible!

Programs about the Bible presented on such channels as National Geographic and other public broadcast stations present the “scientific” or academic approach to the Bible. Nationally and internationally known scholars are interviewed as part of their programming to state that the events described in the biblical narrative did not occur in the manner the Bible presents it as having happened.. The modernist interpretation is then presented to the audience in order to enlighten the public about how *really* to understand the Bible. One need only to think about such programs as those that concerned themselves with *The Gospel of Thomas* and *The Da Vinci Code* to see the power of this pulpit.

Conclusion

There is a clash of two very different cultures occurring round about us in society. The Christian world view is pitted against the atheistic world view in a life and death struggle. One of the spin offs of this passionate conflict is the clash between the two different views about the Bible. We need to make our members aware of this ongoing conflict and teach them what is inherently and logically wrong with that world view and its approach to the Bible.

a clash about miracles

ETHAN R. LONGHENRY

We live in an increasingly confused world. Perhaps one of the most tragic ironies of the modern world is found in the field of biblical studies: so many of those who have studied the Bible the most have the least faith in it and the God who is behind it. This is especially true in terms of miracles; many of those who teach about the Bible in universities and even seminaries and write book after book about biblical subjects do not believe that God performed the miracles recorded in the Bible. Instead, they believe that the stories are either myths or folktales, or they attempt to provide natural explanations for what occurred. Unfortunately, this trend is unsurprising. As more and more people have placed their trust in science over God, it was only a matter of time before such would occur among “religious” persons. Meanwhile, those who still believe in God and in the miracles described in the Bible are portrayed as ignorant, behind the times, brainwashed, or blinded. Why do so many reject the Bible’s claims about God’s miracles? How did we get to this point? Can we have confidence in the claims of the Bible? In our increasingly irreligious and scientific age, these are questions we cannot afford to ignore.

The main culprit for this shift in thinking is a philosophy called modernism. Before the scientific revolution that began around the 1650s, most people never questioned the existence of God or miracles and saw God’s power in many natural events. The scientific revolution and the many discoveries made at that time allowed humans to understand better their planet and the universe around them. Early scientists such as Galileo, Copernicus, Bacon, and Newton magnified God on account of their discoveries; they saw God’s hand in the complexities of the universe and our planet. It would not take long, however, before many scientists and others began to believe that they could explain everything without the presence of God. In the modernist viewpoint, answers to the questions of life and existence are found in science and in things that can be perceived, not in God or a religion. The only things that can truly exist in a modernist viewpoint are things that people can see, hear, taste, touch, or feel. Anything outside of what can be experienced is unable to be “proven,” and therefore dismissed by many.

While the scientists were making these discoveries, philosophers began to stand in opposition to Christianity. In the 18th century, philosophers such as David Hume claimed that by induction, any miraculous story could be dismissed, since it is outside of normal human experience and reason. When the principles of reason and logic become the foundation for belief, any story that involves “unreasonable” or “illogical” events are rejected.

In the 19th century, archaeologists began to dig in the Middle East and discovered many ancient civilizations, including many of those mentioned in the Bible. Literature that had been lost for thousands of years was uncovered, and many stories that were similar to stories in the Bible were discovered.

All of these trends converged in the late 1800s and 1900s and led to the modernism seen often among many liberal denominations and scholars. Based upon an elevated view of science, any story that violated the rules of nature was automatically looked upon with suspicion. Based on the modernist philosophical view, miracles were rejected on the basis of violating reason.

Far from being seen as validating the biblical accounts, archaeological discoveries instead cast further doubt upon them among many scholars.

We see these trends today in two forms: those who explain the miraculous stories away as

myths and legends and those who attempt to find natural explanations for the miraculous events. Those who see the stories as myths often compare them to the stories of other people. After all, they will claim, the Babylonians have a story about a worldwide flood with one human survivor,

Based upon an elevated view of science, any story that violated the rules of nature was automatically looked upon with suspicion. Based on the modernist philosophical view, miracles were rejected on the basis of violating reason.

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and their version is older than the Bible's version! In their view, the Israelites entered Canaan gradually, or perhaps always lived in the midst of the Canaanites, and invented the stories of earlier days in order to have a national "story." The New Testament is not immune from this view: many have made a distinction between the "historical" Jesus and the Jesus "of faith": the "historical Jesus" represents who Jesus "really" was, while the "Jesus of faith," to them, represents the traditions or myths that churches have believed for generations, invented by the disciples to promote their particular view of Jesus.

Others do not want to reject the stories outright, but seek to find natural explanations to explain what the ancients thought were divine actions. In their view, the flood of Genesis 6-9 was either a memory of a rather large flood in the Middle East or, as one noted scientist recently presented, the memory of the flood that created the Black Sea millennia ago. They believe that the exodus occurred, but believe the dividing of the Red Sea in Exodus 14 was the action of tides, or as a recent film director suggested, an effect on the Red Sea from the volcanic eruption of Thera on the Greek island of Santorini. One scientist even came up with the idea that Jesus really did not walk on water in Matthew 14:22-33, but navigated on a piece of ice so as to appear to walk—apparently Peter negotiated another piece of ice, and all of this in a storm!

As we can see, many people will go to all kinds of ludicrous lengths to attempt to explain away the miracles of the Bible. Nevertheless, many of these perspectives have been enshrined as "historical fact" and are presented in universities, seminaries, and even in church buildings across the country and the world. Who is to be believed?

The difference is not between "science" and "faith" or even "reason" and "faith": the difference involves where people place their faith. Where many throughout time have placed their faith in God, his abilities, and his Word, the people who believe the concepts described above have instead placed their faith in science or "humanism"—in themselves or the collective understanding of human beings. The question, then, is a question of faith. In whom should we trust—in God revealing his work in the Scriptures or in the explanations of men? Time would fail us if we attempted to speak about all or even most of the miraculous acts described in the Bible. Let us content ourselves with discussing the greatest miracle recorded in the Scriptures:

the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21; 1 Cor. 15).

Many biblical scholars and others have put forth different explanations for the story of the resurrection of Jesus. Some attempt to turn the story into a myth, believing that the disciples of Christ made up the story after his death out of devotion to him and his teachings. Many others attempt to explain the story away by natural means. Some say that Jesus did not really die on the cross, but simply "swooned," and later awoke, came out of the tomb, and appeared as "resurrected." Some believe that Mary Magdalene visited the wrong tomb. Others perpetuate the story of the Jews (cf. Matt. 28:12-15), saying that the disciples of Jesus stole his body away and claimed that he was resurrected. The claims that the disciples saw Jesus resurrected are explained away as group hallucinations. It is also fashionable in many denominations to "spiritualize" the resurrection, claiming

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that Jesus was raised again “spiritually,” with his physical body remaining in the tomb. All of these explanations attempt to deny the central claim of the Christian faith: that Jesus of Nazareth, although dead, was physically raised again to life on the third day (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-8). Do the explanations of men make better sense of the story, or is the Bible’s story more believable?

The “swoon theory” has been discredited in the eyes of most people since it requires more faith than any other perspective on the resurrection. It would require us to believe that Jesus, having been beaten to an inch of his life, and then crucified (Matt. 27:26), did not really die, despite the testimony of Roman soldiers who would know better (John 19:32-37) and the presence of the linen and perfumes with which he was embalmed (John 19:37-41). He recovers after two and a half days without food or water, leaves the linens perfectly preserved, and is then somehow able to roll away the stone and contend with the Roman guard (John 20:7, Matt. 27:63-64). Indeed, this requires more faith than the Bible’s account!

The same is true for the belief that Mary visited the wrong tomb. Even if this were the case, would not Joseph or Nicodemus have corrected her? Later, when the disciples began to preach Jesus as the resurrected Lord, could not the religious authorities have gone to the correct tomb and presented the body, thoroughly discrediting Christianity? This also is hard to believe!

Most of the alternative explanations surround the disciples: they either steal Jesus’ body away or make up the entire story after Jesus’ death. These claims are quite difficult to reconcile with the presentation of the disciples in the gospel accounts and the book of Acts. All four gospels present the disciples as not fully understanding Jesus’ purpose, even though he told them plainly what would occur (cf. Matt. 16:21). After his death, they were scattered and discouraged (Matt. 26:31). Mary Magdalene went to Jesus’ tomb expecting to further anoint his body. When she saw the stone rolled away and his body missing, she did not immediately think of the resurrection, but asked one whom she supposed to be the gardener where he took the body (John 20:13-15). Even after Mary saw the resurrected Jesus and told such to the disciples, they did not believe her (Luke 24:9-11). Thomas did not believe even after the other ten disciples saw him (John 20:25). These people do not seem

the type to automatically believe in the resurrection; all of them needed to be overcome by the risen Christ to believe that he indeed was raised from the dead.

Who would invent such a tale and place themselves in such a poor light? Yet such is what we are to believe regarding his disciples, who supposedly invented the whole story. There were plenty of other “Messiahs” running around Judea in the first century, and yet when they were executed, no one circulated the same stories about them as the disciples did about Jesus. Likewise, the first time we see a belief in the resurrection of one person as the “firstfruits” of a later resurrection is with the Christians (1 Cor. 15:20-23). Finally, none of the disciples became wealthy on account of their belief in the risen Christ, but instead suffered persecution and, in most cases, death. Who would suffer and even die for a story that was known to be entirely false—a belief of their own invention? It requires quite a lot of faith in the cleverness of the disciples and the depravity of their motives to believe such things!

What about the claims that they saw the risen Christ? None of the disciples claimed that the resurrection of Jesus was merely spiritual; they

claimed that he was physically raised from the dead. Paul established Jesus’ physical resurrection as the centerpiece of the Christian faith in 1 Corinthians 15; Luke recorded how Jesus challenged his disciples to see that he was not merely spirit, but was flesh and blood (Luke 24:38-39). A “spiritual” resurrection was no resurrection at all according to the apostles! But was it all an hallucination? The disciples claimed that they saw the resurrected Jesus at different times in different places over a period of forty days and claimed that he afterward ascended to Heaven (Acts 1:1-10). It is also claimed that over five hundred brethren also saw him, and also his brother James—and that some of these people were still alive and could be questioned regarding the events (1 Cor. 15:1-10). After this no one claimed to have seen him on the earth. These do not fit the pattern of hallucinations, which tend to be more individual and persistent over time. Many people claimed to see the

Who would suffer and even die for a story that was known to be entirely false—a belief of their own invention?

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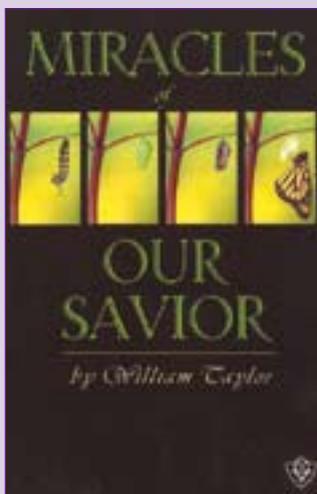
resurrected Jesus for a short period of time in specific times and ways, and then the sightings were no more. The “hallucination theory” does not fit the facts.

The Bible’s claims regarding Jesus’ resurrection are strong. Eleven discouraged disciples and many mourning women are suddenly transformed by a momentous event. The disciples—portrayed as not understanding Jesus or his purpose—come to understand him quickly and begin to promote the claim that Jesus was both Lord and Christ throughout the known world, taking it by storm. In only a few years, some ignorant Galilean fishermen, a tax collector, a political revolutionary, a Pharisee, and a handful of others begin to promote a view regarding Jesus of Nazareth that is understandable to a Jewish population and yet is entirely new in its message. They do not claim that these things happened in secret—quite the contrary. They rely on the people’s own knowledge of the events that occurred regarding Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:22-24; 10:36-40). The religious authorities who killed Jesus were never able to refute the claims of these disciples despite their attempts to hinder the preaching of Jesus the risen Christ (Acts 3-4). In the end, no explanation

of men can make better sense of the story than what the Bible itself teaches: Jesus of Nazareth died and on the third day rose again by the power of God. This represents the most plausible and believable explanation of the events that occurred in Jerusalem so long ago.

We have good reason, therefore, to reject the claims of modernism: there is sufficient evidence to believe that God performed a miracle by raising Jesus from the dead. If God is able to raise Jesus from the dead, then he is certainly able to alter the natural course of events, be it by bringing a great flood, parting a sea, stopping the sun for a time, healing the sick, or many other things. If we have enough reason to believe that God performed a miracle by raising Jesus from the dead, then we have a good start in believing that God could have acted in other miraculous ways also. There is a God, and he certainly has acted in miraculous ways. Let us not be deceived, as Paul says, by the philosophies and traditions of men, but let us walk in the path of Jesus in whom we are grounded (Col. 2:1-11)!

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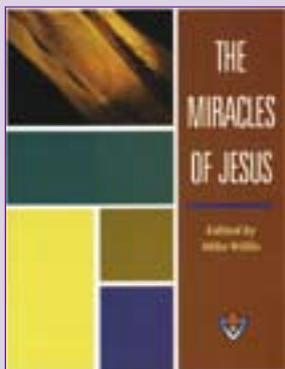


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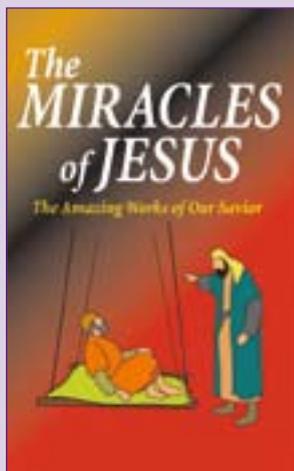


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a clash about religions



CHRIS REEVES

In a series of lessons on “The Clash of Cultures” it is necessary to study a clash of religions. Religion (or a lack thereof) forms the foundation of all cultures. Every culture, including our own, will eventually go the way of its religion. Did not Israel fall after giving herself over to the pagan idolatrous religion of Canaan (2 Kings 17:7ff)? Did not Rome fall after years of the same sensuous paganism (Rev. 17:1–18:24)? Remember the wise words of Solomon: “Righteousness exalts a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34).

When 1,004 Americans were polled on religion in August, 2005, the results were published in a September, 2005 *Newsweek* cover story titled “Spirituality in America” (46-65). The statistics were both astonishing and upsetting. Seventy-nine percent of those polled describe themselves as “spiritual”; sixty-four percent say “religious.” Twenty percent have changed religions since childhood; four percent have abandoned religion altogether. Sixty-seven percent believe that when we die, our souls go to heaven or hell; twenty-four percent do not believe heaven and hell exist. Seventy-nine percent believe someone of another religion than theirs can attain

Clearly, if Christians choose the way of truth, they will eventually clash with their religious neighbors here in America and around the world.

salvation or go to heaven. Clearly, if Christians choose the way of truth, they will eventually clash with their religious neighbors here in America and around the world.

What is Religion?

Let us begin our study by asking, “What is religion?” Our English word “religion” comes from the Old Latin word *religare*, meaning to bind back together again; *re* – back again, and *ligare* – to bind together. Religion then, is the binding together again of mankind and God. Thus, religion requires three things: (1) a belief in the existence of God; (2) a separation of mankind from God through sin; and (3) a means by which mankind can be bound together again with

God. It is within these three areas that a clash of religions takes place. There is a clash over the existence of God. Is there a God (Gen. 1:1), or not? There is a clash over sin. Does sin exist and does it separate us from God (Isa. 59:2; Rom. 3:23; 6:23), or not? There is a clash over the way back to God. Is there just one way back to God through Jesus Christ (John 11:25; 14:6; Acts 4:12), or not?

In the New Testament, the word “religion” is found five times in the King James Version (Acts 26:5; Gal. 1:13, 14; Jas. 1:26, 27). The word “religious” is found twice (Acts 13:43; Jas. 1:26). In the New King James Version and the New American Standard Version, the word “religion” is found five times (Acts 25:19; 26:5; Col. 2:23; Jas. 1:26, 27), and the word “religious” is found twice (Acts 17:22; Jas. 1:26). The American Standard Version also uses the word “religion” (Acts 25:29; 26:5; Gal. 1:13, 14; Jas. 1:26, 27) and “religious” (Acts 17:22; Jas. 1:26). The English words “religion” and “religious” in our Bible versions come to us by way of the Jerome’s Latin Vulgate Bible. He used the Latin word *religio*. The English word “religion” in the New Testament is translated from the Greek words *threskeia* and *threskos*, meaning “external religious worship; ceremonial service or observance; divine service.” Sometimes these Greek words are translated “worship” in the New Testament (Col. 2:18). The English words “religion” in Acts 25:19 and “religious” in Acts 17:22 come from a different Greek word, *deisidaimonia* or *deisidaimon*, meaning “fear of the gods” (translated “superstition” or “superstitious” in some Bible versions). The English word “religious” in Acts 13:43 comes from the Greek word *sebomai*, meaning “to feel awe; to worship; devout.” The English word “religion” in Galatians 1:13-14 is translated from the Greek word, *Ioudaismos*, meaning “the practice of the Jewish faith; Jewish religion.”

What we learn from this word study is that religion contains attitude and action. Religion (whether true or false) is simply a system of cherished beliefs which

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govern and guide a person's life. Of course, one's attitude and action in religion must be according to the truth of God's word before it can be true religion. When James wrote about "pure and undefiled religion" in James 1:26-27, he set forth a very important principle that must be considered. We must understand that there is a religion that is "pure and undefiled" and it is in contrast to religion that is unreal and deceptive. In other words, there is true religion and there is false religion. True religion is set forth by God and recorded in the Bible. False religions are set forth by mankind through their empty and deceptive philosophies (Col. 2:8-23). Let us now take a closer look at the clash of religions.

Theism Clashes with Atheism

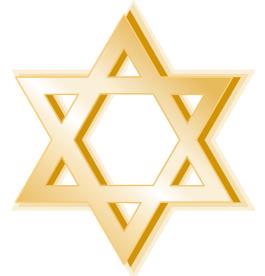
There is a clash between belief in God and belief that God does not exist. There is sound evidence from nature that the complex design of our universe points to a divine designer, God (Pss. 19:1; 139:14; Rom. 1:20; Acts 14:17; Heb. 3:4). Yet, many scientists, intellectuals and others reject the plain evidence which points to God. Some are atheists who are convinced that there is no God. Others are skeptics and agnostics who say they do not know if there is a God or not. Secular humanism is the product of atheism which deifies man and dethrones God. Humanism allows man to make his own rules. Humanism makes man a god and its roots can be traced back to Satan in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:4-5). It is foolish to reject God and live a wicked life (Pss. 10:4; 14:1; 53:1). If we live faithfully we will eventually clash with these fools who say there is no God.

Monotheism Clashes with Polytheism

There is a clash between belief in one God (monotheism) and belief in many gods (polytheism). From the beginning of creation there has been only one God (Gen. 1:1; Isa. 43:10; 44:6; 45:5, 14, 21; Mal. 2:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5). After mankind was created, he used his mind and imagination to fabricate false gods and he began to worship them (Deut. 32:17). There are over 200 references to "gods" in the Bible! The people of God have always clashed with polytheists and idolaters. Like Athens of Paul's day, our world today is also "full of idols" (Acts 17:16). When we stand firm and worship the one true God (Acts 19:26; 1 Cor. 10:14; 2 Cor. 6:16; Gal. 5:20; 1 Thess. 1:9; 1 John 5:21), we will clash with those who worship the false gods of idolatry, including the "idolatry" of money (Col. 3:5).

Christianity Clashes with Paganism

There is a clash between the belief in Jesus Christ and the belief in false saviors. Jesus himself warned of many false Christs (Matt. 24:24). John warned of the anti-Christ who would deny the one true Christ (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). Many seek a way of salvation and an eternal reward apart from Jesus Christ. Islam, Baha'i, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Jainism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, and Judaism are a few of the world religions which attempt to offer a salvation apart from Jesus Christ. There are many other religious cults which believe in Jesus but deny some aspect of his true divine nature (John 1:1-18; 8:58; Col. 2:9). Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, Christian Scientists, the Worldwide Church of God, the Unification Church, Hare Krishna, the Children of God, and the Way International are a few of the more popular religious cults today. The New Age Movement (which is basically "Westernized" Hinduism) and Scientology are also popular pagan religions. These religions boast of self-help spirituality and claim that each one is a god and must fulfill his own divine potential. This kind of religion is especially popular among the Hollywood crowd. Others prefer the pagan occultism of astrology,



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psychic fortunetelling, Rosicrucianism, Satanism, Witchcraft, or Kabbalah. We will clash with all of these pagan religions when we believe the only way to heaven is to obey Jesus Christ (John 11:25; 14:6; Acts 4:12).

The New Testament Church Clashes with Modern Denominationalism

There is a clash between belief in the ancient New Testament church and belief in modern, man-made denominations. Jesus promised he would build his church (Matt. 16:18) and he did that when Peter preached the first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41-47). In the New Testament, local churches belonging to Christ existed (Rom. 16:16), but no others. There were no Baptists, Methodists, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Mennonites, Quakers, Eastern Orthodox, Episcopalians, Unitarian Universalists, or Pentecostals in New Testament times. All followers of Christ were Christians only and the only Christians (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16). It was many years after the New Testament times when men

began to build their own churches (1 Tim. 4:1ff; 2 Tim. 3:1ff). Today, literally hundreds of man-made denominations exist with many different and contradictory doctrines, names,

organizations, and worship practices. This religious division does not bring glory to God (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10-13). Remember, all religions planted by men will one day be uprooted by God (Matt. 15:13). Like Jesus and Paul, when we stand for simple undenominational New Testament Christianity, we will clash with everyone who seeks to defend their man-made religious traditions (Matt. 15:2ff; Col. 2:8ff).

Why Do We Have Religious Clashes Today?

We have religious clashes today because two opposing forces that do not mix will eventually clash. Truth does not mix with error (1 John 4:6). Right does not mix with wrong. Good does not mix with evil (Rom. 12:9; 1 Pet. 3:11). Light does not mix with darkness (1 Thess. 5:5; 1 John 1:5). This

is why we have religious clashes today. There are many religious clashes today because of the nature of truth. Truth is what is real and genuine. Truth is what is found in the New Testament gospel (Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5). Many do not come to the truth because they do not want what is real (Rom. 1:18, 25; 2:8; 2 Tim. 3:7-8). They would rather live in a fantasy world of self-deceit. Others leave the truth after they come to it for the same reason (Gal. 5:7-9; 2 Tim. 2:18; 4:3-4; Tit. 1:14; Jas. 5:19). Still others stumble over truth like stumbling over a rock (1 Pet. 2:7-8) and others do not love the truth (2 Thess. 2:10-12). Many simply allow the Devil to blind their minds to the truth of God's word (2 Cor. 4:2-4). When we understand the nature of truth we will understand why many reject truth and clash with truth. What is truth (John 18:38)? Consider eight characteristics of truth found in the New Testament.

First, truth is objective, not subjective. Truth is outside of us and comes from God, not inside of us coming from self (John 8:40-47; 16:13-15; 17:17; 18:37; 1 John 5:7). Since many today prefer to walk by their own inner personal feelings, they reject truth.

Second, truth is fixed. We cannot add to or take away from God's truth (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Psa. 119:89; Prov. 30:5-6; 1 Tim. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:25; Jude 3; Rev. 21:18-21). Since many today do not want to limit their lives by a fixed standard, they reject truth.

Third, truth is narrow. We are confined to a narrow way in order to make it to heaven (Matt. 7:13-14; Luke 13:24). We must not go beyond the teaching of Christ (2 John 9-11). Since many today want to be "broad-minded" and not "narrow-minded," they reject truth. They do not want to be limited and confined to strict set of teaching.

Fourth, truth is exclusive. There is just one way to heaven and that is by obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ (Matt. 12:30; John 11:25; 14:6; 15:5; Acts 4:12; 2 Cor. 11:3-4; Gal. 1:6-9; Eph. 4:4-6). Since many today believe that all ways or many ways lead to salvation, they reject truth.

Fifth, truth is restraining. Truth keeps people from living immoral lifestyles (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:21; Tit. 1:1). Since many today do not want to live pure, holy, and clean lives, they reject truth.

Sixth, truth is condemning. Truth condemns error. The light of truth exposes the darkness of error (John 3:18-21).

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Since many today want to live in the darkness of sin and not be reproved, they reject truth.

Seventh, truth has a negative side. Truth says “No!” to all that is sinful. Truth cannot tolerate evil and error (Psa. 119:28; Rom. 12:9; 2 Tim. 4:2-4; Tit. 2:11-12; 1 Pet. 2:11; 1 John 2:15-17). Since many today want to do whatever they please and not be told “No!”, they reject truth.

Eighth, truth has a high price. To follow truth will require a high price to be paid and a great sacrifice to be offered (Prov. 23:23; Matt. 16:24). Since many today are looking for an easy lifestyle of “bargain basement religion,” they reject truth. Many today who want a cheap “half-price religion” or “dollar menu religion” of convenience, reject truth.

What Are Christians To Do?

No one likes a clash and a controversy. But, when clashes come (and they will), what are faithful, God-fearing Christians to do? What did Jesus do when he clashed with others (Matt. 12:30; 15:1ff.; 23:1ff.)? What did Paul do

when he clashed with others (Gal. 1:6-9; 2:5, 14; 4:16)? They both stood their ground and stood for the truth! We must do the same. Like Noah, we must obey God even if it means clashing with others and condemning them (Heb. 11:7). We must not back away and back down from clashes and controversies. We must rush forward to meet them in battle. We must be militant and take up the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18), be a strong soldier of Christ (2 Tim. 2:3-4), fight the good fight of the faith (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7), and war the good warfare (2 Cor. 10:4; 1 Tim. 1:18). We must always be ready to give an answer and reason—apologetics—for what we believe (1 Pet. 3:15). We must uphold truth (1 Tim. 3:15) and walk daily in it (3 John 4). We must contend—fight—earnestly for the faith (Jude 3). We must remember the Lord and not be afraid to fight for our family (Neh. 4:14). Friend, take a stand for truth and clash swords when necessary, for your own salvation and for the salvation of your children and the generation that will follow you.

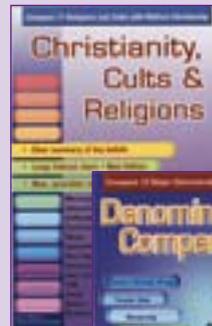
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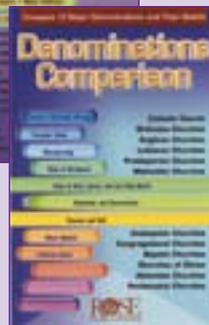
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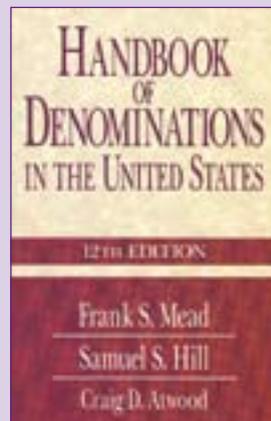


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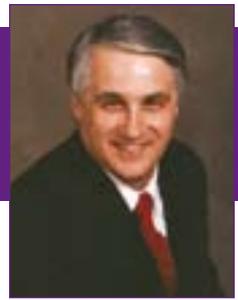
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a clash about knowledge



Can We Know Anything Absolutely?

DANIEL H. KING, SR.

“Epistemology” is a branch of philosophy which concerns itself with the nature and scope of knowledge. From the time of the ancient Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, men have struggled with how it is possible to know anything for certain, to be absolutely sure that it is so. These early philosophers, as well as modern students of the discipline, have set forth beneficial theories in this regard, along with some that have not proven particularly helpful.

Through the centuries, Christian scholars have frequently been influenced by philosophical notions having to do with the attainment of knowledge; sadly, more so at times than by the systematic study of the Word of God. Theology in the twenty-first

century has come to be identified more with philosophical presuppositions than with understanding and explaining biblical ideas or concepts. The reason for this is the fact that the infallibility, essential integrity, and divine authority of the

Theology in the twenty-first century has come to be identified more with philosophical presuppositions than with understanding and explaining biblical ideas or concepts.

Bible have been given up by the majority of Bible scholars in the course of the past one hundred years. A Bible that is admittedly filled with errors and mistakes cannot be held in high esteem as a source for true doctrine or as a standard of moral propriety. Spiritual knowledge cannot be depended upon if it derives from a book that is frequently wrong on a whole host of other questions, even if they are classified as scientific or historical. This is perhaps the most serious, and ultimately erosive, religious error of our day.

Aquinas and Empiricism

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), no doubt the greatest philosopher of the Middle Ages, was an ardent defender of the Christian faith. He lived during the age when the corpus of the writings of the Greek philosopher Aristotle appeared

in Latin translation, and he became enamored of Aristotle's views. He wrote a number of close textual commentaries on Aristotle and embraced much of his thinking. Like Aristotle, Aquinas believed that knowledge (*scientia*) comes through demonstrative syllogisms (basically deductive arguments with true premises). The premises to these syllogisms, in turn, must be inferred from other demonstrative syllogisms. To avoid an infinite regress of syllogisms, Aquinas argued that some premises are not conclusions of other syllogisms. Rather, there are some premises (some knowledge) that form the foundation of all demonstrations.

How then do we come to know these foundational propositions? Aquinas, who held to a form of empiricism, tells us that we can know these propositions only through sense experience. This brings us to religion. If all knowledge is acquired through sense perception and since God is not sensible, how can we even form a conception of God through our active intellect, let alone prove his existence? Aquinas asserts that while we cannot know God directly, we can know him (both form the concept of God and know he exists) by analogy. Sensible objects, in that they are finite and contingent are said to reveal God's infinity and necessity. According to this view, the invisible God is proven by visible things. We shall explore the difficulty with this idea later in the present essay. For now, suffice it to say that this presents us with an intrinsic contradiction. There is great merit and considerable value to Aristotelian logic, but it should not be applied to the divine.

As brilliant as Thomas Aquinas was, he was greatly influenced in his thinking by the predominant philosophical notions of his day. Neo-Platonism was another of his principal influences. It is surprisingly easy even for extraordinarily brilliant men to fall prey to this tendency. The point for us to take away from this is that if it was easy for Aquinas, it may prove easy for us also. Thus, it is important that we not allow ourselves to be drawn into making the same assumptions and be swayed by the same presuppositions as those around us are.

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Christianity as Revealed Religion

Everything that the Christian proclaims and teaches is an attempt to express in human language the truth which has been vouchsafed to him by God through the process known as “divine revelation.” That is how he sees it. That is also his unique perspective in the present world. He takes the side of Paul in his time against his own cultural world and its peculiar *Zeitgeist*. This is especially so in regard to the special nature of this “revealed religion” which the Christian has embraced and for which he makes a case almost daily in both word and deed. Paul stated:

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Eph. 2:17-22, ESV).

Christianity is a revealed religion. God has made himself known in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ, and he has left for all time a written record of that revelation in the words of Sacred Scripture. Spiritual knowledge is gained by careful study of those divinely inspired words which are brought together in the sixty-six books of the Bible. That is how the Christian sees it. But that is not the way our culture sees it.

Centrality of the Claim to Revelation

This written divine communication is the ground and the norm, as well as the content of God’s message to those of all time. As Peter urged upon his brethren the personal responsibility of speaking out in the face of opposition to the Christian message,

he understood the wide chasm that existed between the perspective of the Christian and that of the Greco-Roman mindset of his age. Still, he emphasized that the disciple of Christ must not remain silent in the face of often rabid antagonism and open hostility toward all things “Christian” at the time:

But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame (1 Pet. 3:14-16).

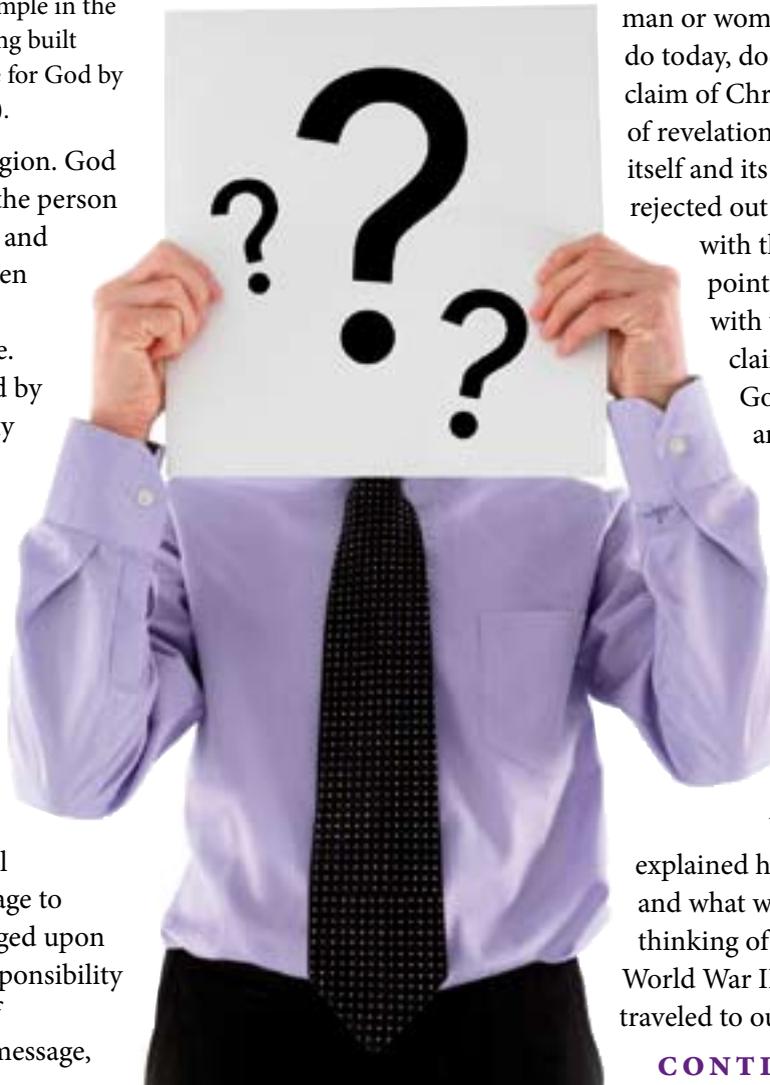
Revelation and Reason

In our own time, the task which Peter encouraged his fellow Christians not to shun is doubly urgent, for as a rule the urbanite or suburbanite Westerner, the man or woman with whom we have to do today, does not understand at all the claim of Christianity to be a religion of revelation, and so both Christianity itself and its supportive claims are often rejected out of hand. Those suffused with the present culture have no point of reference, as ancients did, with which to understand the claim of Christianity regarding God’s revelation of himself and his will for the human family as made known in the person of Jesus Christ or in the words of Sacred Scripture.

Emil Brunner, in his book *Revelation and Reason: the Christian Doctrine of Faith and Knowledge* (Philadelphia:

Westminster, 1946),

explained how the culture was changing and what was happening in the thinking of continental Europe after World War II. Such thinking has now traveled to our own shores and gained



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a powerful foothold in the mindset of modern America:

The most characteristic element of the present age, and that which distinguishes it from earlier periods in history, is the almost complete disappearance of the sense of transcendence and the consciousness of revelation. In the ancient world, in which the Christian Church first arose, the idea of revelation, and the belief that there was such a thing as revelation, was something that belonged to life as such; it was taken for granted. "Revelation," it is true, stood for a variety of conceptions: for primitive mantic practices of divination in order to discover the will of the gods; for oracles, seers, theophanies, and divine signs and wonders; or again for the teaching of thinkers who claimed to have received supernatural "illumination" in a state of ecstasy. But in whatever way revelation took place, and whatever its content may have been, the fact that revelation, as the proclamation of divine mysteries to man, did take place was generally believed. In the last resort, all religion is based upon supposed or genuine revelation; moreover, in the ancient world the phenomenon of irreligion, and skepticism concerning the reality, or even the possibility, of revelation, was at first completely unknown, and even in late antiquity it was still exceptional. In the Middle Ages Christianity became dominant in the Western world. The revealed faith was the Christian faith, and this faith had practically axiomatic validity. Even a person who had not the slightest intention of being religious, and of bringing his life into accordance with his faith, did not doubt that, as a whole, that which the Church proclaimed about the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures was the truth (4, 5).

Since the period of the European Renaissance (14th to 17th centuries), popular thinking has changed radically. A new mentality has taken the

place of the old one. It consists of a complete preoccupation with the things of this world, and "the here and the now" (some have come to call it "immanent" philosophy). For the first time in world history

there is serious evidence of a sort of mass atheism, and of a thoroughly secularized culture. Communism tried to spread it by the iron fist, but ultimately failed in its efforts. Secularism *per se* is proving much more successful through its more subtle methods. Hand in hand with this there has appeared a kind of religion that is interested in "this world only," and in which the very conception of a revelation of

For the first time in world history there is serious evidence of a sort of mass atheism, and of a thoroughly secularized culture.

God and of his will for man is utterly alien.

People have come to believe that this universe which is evident to the senses and understanding of man represents the only true reality. If there is a mysterious divine element, it has only to do with the inexplicable in this material world (Unidentified Flying Objects, alien abductions, seemingly inexplicable phenomena in the Bermuda Triangle, ghosts and hauntings, extra-sensory perception, wicca and witchcraft, Neo-paganism and Earth Mother worship, Native American spirituality, etc.). No longer is there a place at all for a divine "revelation." It is a concept altogether out of sorts with modern thinking.

The Influence of Modern Science

Undoubtedly we have come to this point philosophically and culturally on account of numerous factors. It would be too simplistic to blame scientism alone for our present circumstance. In fact, it is difficult to say whether modern science may be responsible as its major cause, or whether it may simply be its primary effect. However this question may be answered, it is certain that science plays a far greater role in human thought now than ever in any previous time. Once more, Brunner addressed the issue in almost prophetic terms as we have come to experience it in our own time, almost a generation later than the Europeans:

It is true indeed that even today it is still a minority that is interested in science, or even active in it; but even one who has been only to a secondary school forms his ideas about what is true and untrue, certain and uncertain, in some way or another in accordance with an ideal of scientific knowledge—and this means in terms of natural science. Whatever cannot be proved scientifically is either not quite true or not quite certain. All that lies beyond the perception of the senses and the conclusions of logic, all that cannot be proved and verified experimentally, is "subjective," "hypothetical," or improbable and incredible. The Christian claim to revelation stands in the sharpest possible opposition to this conception of truth. For here the Church proclaims as absolute truth that which cannot be proved by the intellect nor verified by experience. Hence the Christian doctrine of revelation is regarded with the greatest mistrust (*Revelation and Reason*, 5-6).

Stated rather simplistically, the history behind this rejection of revelation of divine truth is an interesting one. The concept fell apart by stages in modern thinking. To begin with, during the early centuries the church responded to threats to sound doctrinal teaching by appealing to the

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canon of Holy Scripture, then to the dogma created by the leaders of the church at the time. The bishops of the largest, most influential, and oldest churches of the period came to embody (in the popular mind) the traditional teaching—as opposed to that of the heretics like the Gnostics—and were considered by many early Christian thinkers to be, in a sense, infallible in their pronouncements. This latter element grew over the centuries to enormous proportions, very far afield from what was revealed in Holy Scripture. It became the justification for the papacy. During the Reformation era this first leg of the stool fell out from under the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Martin Luther, John Calvin, and a host of others saw to that. Infallible Scripture took its place in the minds of those who opposed tradition-heavy Catholicism. Reformers called for *sola scriptura*, that is, the Scripture alone as authority for sound doctrinal teaching. Spiritual knowledge could only be learned from the Bible. Church tradition lost its efficacy and authority almost entirely for those who were Protestant in their orientation.

The Influence of Humanism, Modernism, and Liberalism

The Renaissance, however, not only broke the power of Roman Catholicism and made the Reformation possible, but it also set the stage for other more radical shifts in the thinking of modern man. The popularity of humanism during the Renaissance, at first a benign philosophy associated with the revival of ancient Greek conceptions, along with the beginnings of the scientific revolution, set in place a series of skeptical trends which in the latter stages led to an assault on the underpinnings of all ancient religion, including Christianity. So, the second stage came about with the overt attack of modernism against the Bible, supported by supposed “proofs” set forth by scientists in regard to creation (Darwinism), the precise nature of the physical earth, etc., as well as certain historical evidences which appeared on the surface to contradict biblical events. At the last, the other leg seemed to fall out from under Christianity generally. Most of the larger Protestant denominations, along with the Roman Catholic Church, surrendered the Bible to modernist presuppositions. They gave up the notion of infallible scripture. When they did this, however, they surrendered the last vestige of revealed authority in religion. In a sense, religion lost its only direct connection with God!

The result has been both dramatic and dismal in terms of modern religion’s appeal to the contemporary rational mind. Two of the most important recent academics in

Christian theology have attempted to salvage something which they deem worthwhile from the scattered debris left after the assault on Scripture and Christianity by modernism. Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, although they share modernism’s conviction that objective, factual investigation of the Bible will inevitably destroy traditional belief in its truthfulness, have nevertheless scrounged through the wreckage and discovered several things that they believe are worth keeping. Not much of either historical or scientific value is left when they are finished, though. Bultmann overtly spoke of “de-mythologizing” the Bible. Neither Barth nor Bultmann were very successful in convincing large numbers of people to join them in their spiritual adventure, however. And with the coming of yet another generation of post-modernistic skeptics, even the moral and spiritual aspects of Christianity have seemed to have little to offer us, according to this new and secular way of thinking. Moral relativism (truth is always relative to some particular frame of reference, such as a language or a culture; there are no absolutes) thus appears to have won the day. Obviously, this relativistic road to “truth” has proven to be a dead end street!

Personal Revelation

For multiplied millions, however, the biblical revelation still has enormous appeal. In the Bible God introduces himself to the human family as the great “I Am” (Exod. 3:14). God in the Bible is not a mere concept, he is personal. His name is holy, and must not be taken in vain (Exod. 20:3). When men fell from his grace, they hid themselves from the “face” of God (Gen. 3:8). Cain said, “. . .from thy face shall I be hid” (Gen. 4:14). The Psalmist prays, “Cast me not away from thy presence; hide not thy face from me” (Ps. 27:9). Moses instructed the priests to pronounce the following benediction upon the people of Israel: “The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace” (Num. 6:23f.).

In Holy Scripture, “God as a tall man stoops down to a little child and lowers himself upon his knee, so that the child may look into his face” (Emil Brunner). The most personal aspect of the biblical revelation has to do with the fact that, in a spiritual sense at least, the final revelation of God to man, is described in terms of seeing God “face to face” (John 1:18; 14:7, 9-11; 1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:2). The light of the knowledge of the glory of God has shined “in the

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face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). The essence of the biblical revelation is a personal revelation of God.

Possible Relations Between Science and Scripture

Science and the scientific method cannot be ignored in the present environment. It must be understood, if only generally, and dealt with as the important discipline that it is. Humanistic studies, comprised of all of those matters which pertain to human beings in the ancient context as well as in modern life, must be placed in some sort of relation to divine revelation in Scripture in order properly to understand and interpret them. In point of fact there are several possible relations between humanistic studies and the Bible. The following suggestions may not be exhaustive, but are certainly suggestive.

1. **Human studies—science, philosophy, history, psychology, etc.—are alone the absolute foundation for all knowledge, whether it comes from nature or from the Bible.** In this view, whatever is truth in the Bible (if anything at all) must be verified by and interpreted within the context of humanism. Nature can be understood *completely* on its own terms. There is no valid truth in the Bible apart from human verification. Human study *alone* provides the way, the truth, and the life.
2. **Truth is truth wherever it may be found.** Nature *and* the Bible both bring a valid approach to knowledge. It is the task of the theologian to integrate the truths of these two sources of knowledge. Both of these disciplines may be understood *completely* separate from each other; but since there is truth in both, there is value in synthesizing these truths. Human *and* religious studies provide the way, the truth, and the life.
3. **The realms of nature and of the Bible are radically separate.** Science deals with nature *alone*, and the Bible deals with religion *alone*. The two do not intersect. Both may be understood *completely* on their own. Since there is no connection between them, it is useless to try to synthesize them.
4. **God has revealed himself both in nature and in the Bible.** Nature by itself is misleading. Both may be legitimately studied from the standpoint of the Bible and the Bible *alone*. Christ *alone* as He is represented in His Word is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).

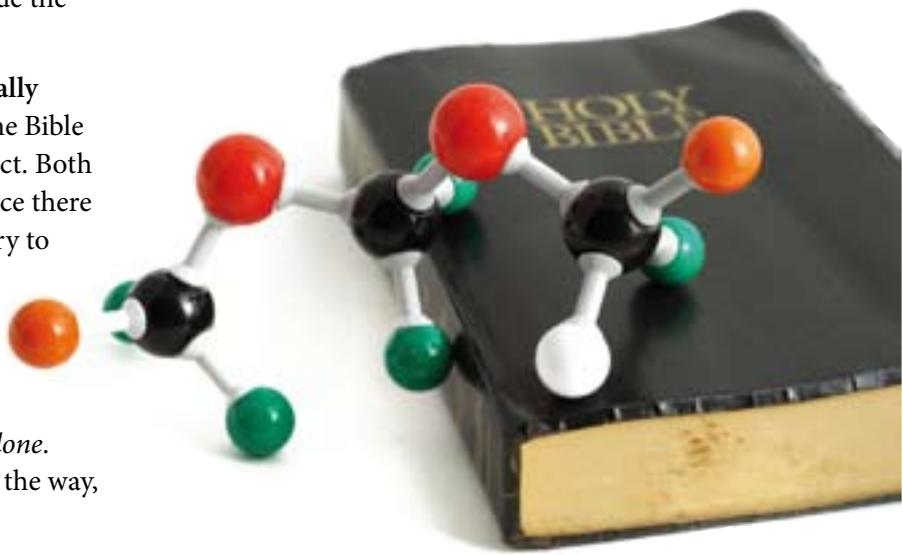
In point of fact, the last of these possibilities is the only one that is consistent with the biblical revelation. The Bible must never be interpreted in the light of science. Science, with its changing theories and hypotheses, is not the final arbiter of what is true and what is not. The assumption that it qualifies to become so is one of the greatest fallacies of our time. It has led to the false doctrine of theistic evolution (the theory which states that God created the universe and/or all living things by a process of gradual development over millions of years) and a host of other associated evils. Ultimately, it is the source of much skepticism regarding every aspect of the biblical text, for it starts out by reflecting negatively upon the first three chapters of the Bible. After it has created serious doubt about whether the Bible may be trusted in its opening revelations, no part of Scripture can be considered safe from the effects of its strangling tentacles.

Humanistic vs. Biblical Faith

Clearly the Bible deals primarily in the arena of faith. Humanism has expressed itself with regard to most everything in our time, and faith is certainly not an exception. The humanistic concept of faith, embraced by most religious people of our day, may be outlined as follows:

1. The process generally starts with doubt—attempting to prove the validity of an assertion in order to offer it as truth—as worthy of one’s faith.
2. It relies upon genius, creativity, initiative, freedom of exploration, and capabilities of mankind.
3. It relies upon the five senses as a basis for collecting the relevant data.

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4. It looks for patterns and integrates the data and interprets it on the basis of a paradigm which interprets our common experience and understanding of the world.
 5. A hypothesis is formed which leads to testable predictions which results in a new round of observations.
 6. The result is a probability statement as to what things are like or as to how new pieces of data entering the system will relate to the old.
5. Faith in the Word of God is not based upon humanistically-derived knowledge. Rather, faith itself is the foundation of knowledge. "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. 11:3). Only in the light of revelation can it (nature) be read aright. Faith is the key of knowledge. It is the basis for discerning between truth and error.
 6. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom.11:17). The assurance and evidence for faith is God's Word.

In summary, the data is brought together in such a way as to yield a conclusion, a faith statement as to how things probably are. The conclusion is in the hand of mankind. It is under human control, it is a human achievement, and it is created upon a human basis such as reason or some other faculty of mankind. It is evident from every angle that such faith as this is man-centered rather than being God-centered.

The Biblical concept of faith, on the other hand, is just the reverse of all that has just been stated. In this instance, the clear difference has to do with what God has revealed about it in his Word. Therefore, scripture citations are appropriate at every turn in order for us to understand it in its biblical, contextual sense:

1. Faith is first of all an act of knowledge; it is the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4:6). It is therefore an intelligent awareness of the God who reveals himself. Jesus said to Peter on one occasion, "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). In this instance he had revealed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.
2. Faith is not a human creation; it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8) in order that faith might not rest on the wisdom of man but in the power of God (1 Cor. 2:4, 5). This is true because Christ himself is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2).
3. The Spirit and Word work together (Eph. 6:17). No man can create faith; God is the author of it. The Spirit enlightening the human mind through the medium of the Word created faith in God, from start to finish. In the Scriptures faith is stated to be the gift of God, powerful unto salvation, enlightening the hearts of those who search for truth as for hidden treasure.
4. Faith is not built upon an external foundation, but is itself the assurance, the conviction, the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1).

To attempt to use the data of reason as criteria for determining whether Scripture is the Word of God is to doubt that which has already been declared by God. It is similar to Christ's temptation in the wilderness, namely, to doubt that he was the Son of God after it had already been affirmed by the proclamation of the Word of God in Old Testament prophecy. Clearly this position is Satanic in its origin. Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the God-breathed Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). So, true faith is God-centered rather than being man-centered. The more man-centered faith becomes, the less true it is to God; the more truly God-centered it is, the greater its fidelity to the One in whom it has its center.

General and Special Divine Revelation

God has communicated with man in two distinct ways. Human beings have been forced to invent terminology with which to describe these concepts, since Holy Scripture only teaches the ideas conceptually. The first method is often called "general revelation." It refers to a knowledge of God and of spiritual matters through natural means, such as the observation of the physical universe (Ps. 19:1-6), philosophy and human reasoning, the unique nature of the human conscience, and divine providence or superintendence of history. But the theory of general revelation must not be delineated without careful attention to the biblical connection of the notion with human guilt and the anger of God over human sinfulness. The idea itself is valid, but it has often been spoiled by twisted human leanings in one direction or another. So says Paul in his explanation of the concept:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the

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world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened (Rom. 1:18-20).

General revelation is only a pale reflection of what may be known of God, and the human mind and conscience have a tendency on account of human sinfulness to obscure, darken or even obliterate this knowledge. On account of this fact of our existence in God's world, some (even in a heathen context) have done by nature the things contained in the law of God, even though they lived their lives outside of the covenant community of God (Rom. 2:14, 15). Thus, on the Areopagus, Paul argued that in one sense every human being is to be seen as the offspring of God (Acts 17:28), and that in very fact he is not very far from any one of us (Acts 17:27). However, he goes on to point out that the human family has gotten very far from him, and so, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

Special divine revelation, on the other hand, is the belief that knowledge of God and of spiritual matters generally can only be discovered supernaturally. That is, disclosure of God's truth only comes ultimately by means of God's communication of himself and his will for man through a miraculous process. Throughout human history God communicated his word to men by various means, i.e. by angels, prophets, visions, dreams, inspiration, etc. Finally, he spoke to men in the person of his Son:

God, having spoken in former times in fragmentary and varied fashion to our forefathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by a Son whom he appointed to be the heir of everything and through whom he also made the universe. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact likeness of his being, and he holds everything together by his powerful word. After he had provided a cleansing from sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Highest Majesty and became as much superior to

the angels as the name he has inherited is better than theirs (Heb. 1:1-4, ISV).

The record of that revelation was not left to the faulty memories or ordinary human beings, or to the fallible human processes of transmission. Rather, the apostles and prophets of the New Testament era "inscripturated" the Word of God, embodied the sayings and teaching of Jesus and his apostles in the Sacred Writings for all generations to ponder and apply. A simple reading of the New Testament reveals that it is this process which makes available to our own and every future generation of men the identical formulation of divine truth that was embraced by the apostolic generation:

Now I make known unto you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:36-37).

So, at the end of the written New Testament, in that very document which almost certainly was the last of the writings of that special era, the book of Revelation, it lays claim to the extraordinary place of Sacred Writ in the minds and hearts of those who read it. Nothing must be added to it or taken from its pages. It is the unchangeable Word of God, the written source of spiritual truth and of all trustworthy divine knowledge:

I testify to every man who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

Biblical Epistemology

The Bible alone, then, is the source from which Christians are called to draw their knowledge of truth, in technical language, their epistemology. Scripture is adequate for every good work, including defending the faith. "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteous, that

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the man of God may be perfect; thoroughly furnished to every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Moreover, in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom stored (Col. 2:3). The Christian is called to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5). The only biblically acceptable apologetic is therefore one which is drawn from the Bible and acknowledges the epistemic lordship of Christ. Any position other than this is merely knowledge falsely so called (1 Tim. 6:20).

Not only are epistemologies derived from sources other than Scripture dishonoring to Christ, but they sometimes lead to an abortive defense of the faith. Whether one’s theory of knowledge is grounded in Aristotelian logic, demonstrative reasoning, so-called “common sense” or something else akin to it, this, and not Scripture becomes the ultimate authority of the one who adheres to it. It becomes, in a sense, more sure than the sure word of God.

But Scripture teaches us that Scripture itself is to be our final authority (2 Pet. 1:19, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 1 John 5:9; 1 Thess. 2:13). If Scripture is the final authority,

Scripture is adequate for every good work, including defending the faith.

and if one “proves” the authority of Scripture on the basis of something else other than Scripture, then in so doing he proves that Scripture is not the final authority. Needless to say, this is not a desirable outcome.

When Pilate asked, “What is truth?” (John 18:38), he did not realize that he was standing in the presence of the one who is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Francis Bacon remarked in his essay *Of Truth*: “What is truth? said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer.” Whether he was being wistful or simply jesting—his words could be taken in either sense—it is hard to tell. Either way his question ended the interview. He did not wait for an answer because he clearly believed that his prisoner would be no help at all in the matter, and so he was probably only dismissing both him and the subject. This does not mean that the writer John felt there was not an answer to the query. He documented no answer directly in words, but he recorded the entire following narrative of the death and resurrection of Jesus in order to respond to the question in the resplendent deeds at the cross and the empty tomb. In these historic events we learn that Jesus is genuinely

the way, the truth, and the life, and that no man comes to the Father except by him. It is also worth noting, that John chose to narrate the events described in a document for posterity: “...these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:30).

God wants us to be intimately acquainted with him, to know him, the only true God (John 17:3). This knowledge is available in Jesus Christ and his Word, the Bible. Paul warns that knowledge of God does not come through human means of achieving knowledge. In its wisdom the world does not know God (1 Cor. 1:21). In its unaided wisdom alone, the world will *never* come to know God. Therefore, we will be cheated if we attempt to know God through philosophy, the traditions of men, or the basic principles of the temporal world (Col. 2:8-10). It is only in Christ that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid (Col. 2:3; cf. 1 Cor. 1:30; John 1:17; 1 John 5:20).

Truth is not merely an intellectual concept. It is far more. So, intellectuals commit more than a general logical fallacy when they assume this to be so. They displease their Maker. They offend and anger their Creator. And, to do so is much more serious than anything else that might even be conceived. In the Final Judgment God will prove his anger toward those who “know not God and obey not the gospel,” in that, “They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence (literally, “face”) of the Lord and from the glory of his might” (2 Thess. 1:9).

In his revelation he has revealed to us that we shall know the doctrine when we will to do God’s will (John 7:17), and we know the truth when we walk in it (Ps. 26:3). Since human beings are susceptible to being blinded by the gods of this present age (2 Cor. 4:4), it is the duty of every Christian to have a part in the casting down of false arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10:5).

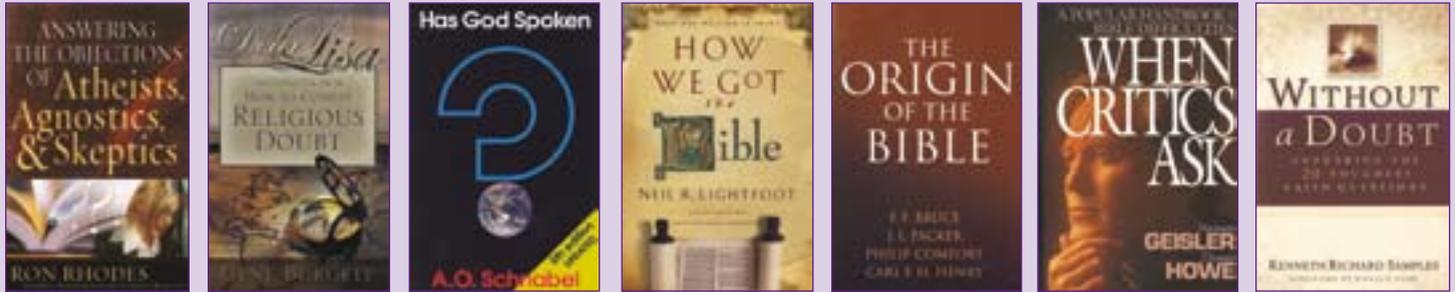
Empiricism, the way of the five senses, is not the road to authentic knowledge of the divine. Jesus explained that if we are not willing to listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will we be persuaded even though one were to come back from the dead (Luke 16:31). The Jews in the days of Christ and the apostles sought out their own unique brand of empirical knowledge, while the sophisticated Greeks yearned for philosophical knowledge, but Paul declared that God ultimately will destroy the wisdom of the wise and

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the understanding of the prudent. This is so because knowledge of God does not come through human pursuit of wisdom, but through Christ, who is, in his person and divine office, the power and the wisdom of God. Paul told the Corinthians that the cross of Christ seemed to be mere foolishness and certainly was a stumbling block to those

who sought for empirical and philosophical foundations apart from Christ (1 Cor. 1:18-25). This was true in the time of Christ and the apostles, and it is just as true today. Philosophy is not the road to sure knowledge. The Bible, the Word of the Living God is!



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a clash about morality



RON HALBROOK

“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34). The strength of a nation is not military, economic, or geographical but moral. God measures the character of a people, which determines their fate (Prov. 2:21-22). Moral character is first individual, and is shaped in the home, then reflected in society and in such institutions as its government. “It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness” (Prov. 16:12; cf. 25:5; 31:4-5). As America’s moral character declines, God calls His people: “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4).

There is a sharp contrast between the moral standards revealed in God’s Word and the standards practiced by modern man. This clash reflects the warfare between God and Satan for the souls of men. How can God’s people stand on higher ground when the world around us is sinking deeper and deeper into the quagmire of moral degeneration? Will we be pulled down into this filth and stench, or will we help to pull our fellowmen to safety?

The answer is found in our attitude toward God and his Word, and in our recognition of the declining moral standards of our time. The foundation of morals is found in God and in the Bible. A fierce battle is raging between biblical morals and brazen immorality. In this age of darkness, doubt, and degeneracy, faithful saints shine as beacons of light!

The Foundation of Morals: God and the Bible

God created man in his own image (Gen. 1:27). Man is uniquely created with a moral capacity and free will in order that he may fulfill his highest purpose: fellowship with God. Man is wholly dependent upon God to define his origin, nature, duty, happiness, and destiny. True moral standards and character are found in our relationship with God, and he revealed everything pertaining to that relationship in the Bible. When asked to identify the greatest commandment, Jesus pointed out that all that God teaches on proper conduct rests on our having a right relationship with God:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matt. 22:37-40).

The foundation of morality is the reality of God, our relationship to God, and the instruction God has given in the Bible.

People who know they are created in God’s image in order to have fellowship with God for time and eternity learn to view God and their fellowmen in a certain way. This outlook shapes their attitude and conduct in a certain way. This first worldview results in a life of self-discipline aimed at serving God and our fellowmen in keeping with the instructions given in the Bible. Solomon

People who know they are created in God’s image in order to have fellowship with God for time and eternity learn to view God and their fellowmen in a certain way.

summed it up: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13).

People who do not know who or what they are elevate their own selfish desires to a god-like status, which shapes their attitude and conduct very differently. This outlook results in a life of self-indulgence which has no well defined higher aim.

Because the life built on the foundation of God and the Bible fulfills its unique purpose for existing, anyone who builds his life on that foundation finds fulfillment and satisfaction, and brings glory to God. The life lived off this foundation goes awry. In pursuing a course of dissipation,

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the individual experiences dissatisfaction, discouragement, depression, and destruction. True wholeness or happiness will always be just out of reach and he will be haunted by the sense that something important is missing. When our lives are not centered on God and his Word, we are “lost” in the most profound sense of the term.

This clash of worldviews and conduct reflects the warfare between God and Satan for the souls of men.

A Fierce Battle Rages: Biblical Morals vs. Brazen Immorality

The fierce battle between biblical morals and brazen immorality is being fought on many fronts. God in the Bible teaches the following principles which shape moral attitudes and conduct: the value of life, a sober mind, sexual purity, honesty, and service to our fellowman. Let us consider each of these five principles.

1. The Value of Life

God in the Bible teaches that he made man in his own image so that we can have fellowship with him (Gen. 1:27). He is “the father of spirits” and he ordained that our bodies are “fearfully and wonderfully” shaped in our mother’s womb (Heb. 12:9; Ps. 139:14-16). Mankind has been taught by God to respect the value of each individual human life from the beginning of time (Gen. 4:10; Exod. 20:13).

The Bible protects the value of each life by teaching, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” which includes the prohibition of murder (Rom. 13:9-10). God reinforced the value of life by requiring the death penalty for murderers (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:12-15). Civil government is ordained by God to use the sword in protecting innocent life and in executing divine “wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom. 13:1-7, see v. 4).

Modern man has created a culture of death which clashes with the value of life taught by God. Actually, this sin like all sins has been practiced by man in one way or another, to one degree or another, all through history, but modern man has shaped his own version of disrespect for human life. How did this happen?

The Renaissance Age (1300s-1600s) represented a shift away from the absolute power of oppressive government toward the recognition of the value of the individual person with God-given rights and liberties. This age included the renewed study of ancient Greek and Roman writers. In 1455

Gutenberg invented the first printing press and printed the Latin Vulgate Bible. The Protestant Reformation of the 1400s-1600s put the Bible into the hands of the common man in his own language. As the knowledge of God’s Word spread, there was a renewed appreciation for the value of each human life.

America was founded largely by Protestants seeking to exercise their religious convictions based on their understanding of the Bible free from dictation by European governments. These immigrants started schools, colleges, and universities with the primary purpose of equipping young people to read the Bible.

The “classical liberalism” of the Renaissance Age and of American history through the nineteenth century assumed a moral order revealed by God’s Word, or inherent in “natural law.” In the twentieth century this older liberalism broke into two groups which increasingly clashed: *conservatives* who maintained traditional concepts of individual freedom often in tandem with traditional moral standards and moral order, and *modern liberals* who gradually emphasized new frontiers of individual freedom which moved away from traditional moral standards, moral restraints, and moral order toward moral chaos. “What liberalism has constantly moved away from are the constraints on personal liberty imposed by religion, morality, law, family, and community.” “Liberalism moves, therefore, toward radical individualism and the corruption of standards that movement entails.”¹

In short, in the name of elevating individuals and expanding their freedoms, modern liberalism destroys the moral bulwarks which define and defend

the value of life. A revolution erupted in the 1960s which promised the Age of Aquarius but which produced instead the Age of AIDS. As the course of American history has veered away from respect for God and the Bible, the value of human life has declined in many ways.

Signs and symptoms of the devaluation of human life have multiplied as modern liberalism has constantly expanded

A revolution erupted in the 1960s which promised the Age of Aquarius but which produced instead the Age of AIDS.

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its definition of and demands for individual liberty divorced from moral standards. The Supreme Court legalized abortion January 22, 1973 and about a million and a half babies per year were sacrificed on the altar of “a woman’s right to choose” (her right to choose to murder the baby growing in her womb!). By January 22, 2008 about 50 million babies had been slaughtered.² Princeton University’s Bioethics Professor Peter Singer (1999-) extends pro-abortion arguments to rationalize infanticide and euthanasia of disabled infants: “Killing a disabled infant is not morally equivalent to killing a person. Sometimes it is not wrong at all.”³ Think of the implications of declaring a disabled person not a real person!

By 2008 the culture of death had legalized euthanasia or assisted suicide in the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Albania, Japan, Columbia, parts of Australia, and in our state of Oregon. Movie scenes become bloodier and more grizzly by the year as “art forms” for entertainment. It is no wonder that rape, murder, gang violence, and school shootings are commonly reported as the culture of death and the death of culture spreads.

2. A Sober Mind

God made man in his image with intelligence so that he can communicate with us. The gift of language makes communication possible. God spoke to Adam in making him steward of the Garden of Eden, in defining good and evil, in assigning him to name the animals, and in giving the law of marriage (Gen. 2:15-17, 19-20, 24). Man can understand God’s Word with its rebukes of sin and its promises of forgiveness of sin through the Savior. God appeals to man’s reasoning power: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord” (Isa. 1:18; cf. Rom. 12:1). “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17).

God’s Word teaches man the necessity of maintaining a sober, clear, or self-controlled mind, which is imperative in order for man to know God, himself, and his fellowmen. Satan clouds and confuses the minds of men with lies, false religions, and vain philosophies, but also through the influence of intoxicants. Mind-altering drugs are used for “recreational” purposes. The most prevalent by far is alcohol

in beer, wine, whiskey, liquor, and other strong drinks. “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Prov. 20:1). Intoxicants are associated with waste, neglect of duty, and poverty; with sorrow and strife, wounds and diseases, temptations and delusions, recklessness and addiction; and with callousness and injustice (Prov. 23:20-21, 29-35; 31:4-5).

God warns, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith” (1 Pet. 5:8-9). In teaching us to be morally alert, sober-minded, or self-controlled, the Holy Spirit used the Greek verb *nepho*, which literally means “to be free from the influence of intoxicants.”⁴ Driver education textbooks report that research shows, “The effects of alcohol begin with the first drink.” “The first effects are impairment of judgment and reason and weakening of self-control and normal inhibitions. A driver’s normal cautions begin to desert him.”⁵ Even social drinking clouds a person’s judgment and makes him more vulnerable to temptation.

America is awash in alcohol. Many young people begin drinking during elementary, middle school, and junior high years. College campuses are well known for “binge” drinking (five or more drinks per occasion). About 100,000 deaths per year in the U.S. are alcohol related.

- 5% of all deaths from diseases of the circulatory system are attributed to alcohol.
- 15% of all deaths from diseases of the respiratory system are attributed to alcohol.

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- 30% of all deaths from accidents caused by fire and flames are attributed to alcohol.
- 30% of all accidental drownings are attributed to alcohol.
- 30% of all suicides are attributed to alcohol.
- 40% of all deaths due to accidental falls are attributed to alcohol.
- 45% of all deaths in automobile accidents are attributed to alcohol.
- 60% of all homicides are attributed to alcohol.⁶

The mayhem and misery caused by alcohol is incalculable: diseases, fornication, adultery, rapes, divorces, failed businesses, abused children, accidents, robberies, burglaries, murders, etc.

Other mind-altering drugs such as marijuana, heroine, and cocaine promise happiness but intoxicate the mind and lead to all sorts of sins. America's fascination with getting a "buzz" or intoxication via alcohol and other drugs clashes with God's demand for a sober mind.

3. Sexual Purity

God created mankind male and female, and he provided for sexual fulfillment and purity in marriage: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). The sexual relationship shared in marriage is like a spring of pure refreshing water: "Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Prov. 5:18, see vv. 15-19). "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). The warning to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" includes sexual sins (1 Pet. 2:11; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

The 1960s was an era of revolution against traditional moral standards and authorities in the name of freedom from "intellectual conformity, spiritual emptiness, and social injustices."⁷ The result was rampant permissiveness and hedonism which imposed new kinds of conformity, emptiness, and injustice on a generation whose slogans were, "If it feels good, do it," "Do your own thing," and, "It is forbidden to forbid." "The symbol of this attitude was...the Woodstock festival, where half a million youths camped in the rain and mud to listen to rock music, take drugs, and engage in sex" on a farm at Bethel, New York August 15-18, 1969.⁸



The promised blessings of love and peace turned out to be a moral nightmare instead. Pornography became a multibillion dollar industry promoting sexual fantasies leading to sexual addiction, fornication, and adultery on an unprecedented scale. Divorce laws have been loosened to the point that marriage vows have become meaningless to many people, and marriage has morphed into a merry-go-round of serial polygamy. "Live-in" companions are now commonplace. President Bill Clinton was impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives on December 19, 1998 for lying to the Independent Counsel and the nation about his sexual tryst in the Oval Office, though he was not removed from office.

Easy divorce has destabilized the home with a tsunami effect on children. Parents pursuing promiscuity have abused, abandoned, and aborted their children as "inconvenient." Children of divorced homes often do not have the skills or trust necessary to establish stable homes when they marry. Many of them fail in marriage, or fail to marry, simply living together without the marriage covenant and commitment.

In the early 1930s, 28 percent of women 15-19 years old bearing a first child conceived it out of wedlock, and by the early 1990s it was 89 percent.⁹ By 2005 about 4 of every 10 babies were born out of wedlock, the most dramatic rise

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occurring among women in their 20s. “Experts said the overall rise reflects the burgeoning number of people who are putting off marriage or living together without getting married. They said it also reflects the fact that having a child out of wedlock is more acceptable nowadays and not necessarily the source of shame it once was.”¹⁰ Having a “love child” is the latest Hollywood celebrity fad eroding the stigma of immorality.

The miseries of the sexual revolution include sexually transmitted diseases (STD) or infections (STI). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gives a long list of STDs including bacterial vaginosis (BV), chlamydia, gonorrhea, genital herpes, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), syphilis, trichomoniasis, and others. The acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) has reached pandemic levels with 33 million people afflicted in 2007, causing over 2 million deaths including 330,000 children.

Homosexuals are pushing their agenda for social acceptance with wide support from political parties, businesses, schools, governmental agencies, and other groups. Our society is tolerating advocates for transgender practices, sex with children, and bestiality. Prof. Peter Singer’s favorable review of a book promoting bestiality says that the Judeo-Christian tradition posited a great gulf between man and animals (“Humans alone are made in the image of God”), but when we understand that actually “we are great apes,” sex with animals “ceases to be an offence to our status and dignity as human beings.”¹¹

Dancing and immodest dress have become so vulgar as to defy polite description, further undermining morality and clashing with the teaching of God’s Word.

4. Honesty

The Bible emphasizes the imperative of honesty and integrity. Jesus teaches total honesty: “But let your conversation be, Yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matt. 5:37). Honest labor should replace all forms of stealing as a means of income to provide for daily needs (Eph. 4:28). Employers and employees must render what is justly due to each other (Col. 3:22-4:1). God hates “a lying tongue” and dooms “all liars” to “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (Prov. 6:16-19; Rev. 21:8).

Lying, stealing, cheating, and corruption in financial dealings have become a way of life to many people. Polls consistently show the number of high school students who cheat on exams is well over 50 percent (a 2002 poll of over 14,000 students showed 74 percent), leading to this conclusion: “The evidence is that a willingness to cheat has become the norm....The scary thing is that so many kids are entering the workforce to become corporate executives, politicians, airplane mechanics, and nuclear inspectors with the dispositions and skills of cheaters and thieves.”¹² After much research and writing on this problem, David Callahan reported that faculty and administrators are looking for ways to bring integrity back to the college campus, but, “What most still lack...is a compelling moral argument against cheating.”¹³

Wonder of wonders, men who eject God and the Bible from campuses and the public square cannot find a compelling *moral* argument against cheating! Or stealing, or gambling, or graft and corruption.

Callahan reports about 79 percent of workers steal from their employers or would consider doing so, a third of businesses fail because of employee theft, and such theft costs our economy upwards of \$600 billion a year.¹⁴ Much theft occurs through employees ignoring their duties, sleeping on the job, abusing computers

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(playing games, viewing pornography), and otherwise failing to give an honest day's labor for their wages, and by employers cheating employees, padding expense accounts, deceiving customers or vendors, and utilizing kickbacks.

Gambling is a socially acceptable way of stealing, manipulating people through games of chance to take gain from them. Opportunities and attractions are endless in a multi-billion dollar web of government sponsored lotteries, internet gambling, convenience gambling (slot machines, electronic devices, etc. in public places), casino gambling, petty gambling at work, charity gambling (bingo, community fund raisers, etc.), and horse and dog racing, all of which are legal, not to mention illegal avenues of gambling (bookmakers, animal fighting, etc.).

In addition to occasional \$10-\$20 wins from lottery tickets, many gamblers get an unexpected windfall of devastating problems: emotional, compulsive, financial, family, employment, criminal, and legal. Compulsive gambling is now considered an "impulse control disorder" rather than a moral issue by many people in the health service community, as moral principles and personal accountability slip out of view in our society.

The clash between the Bible mandate of honesty and modern man's dishonesty is stark indeed. In making the case for integrity, fuzzy "social ideals" are no substitute for God's Word.

5. Service to Our Fellowman

The Bible teaches us to put God first and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-39). Serving God lays a moral foundation for serving our fellowman. Each individual made in God's image is worthy of our love, attention, protection, and care. Rather than living selfish lives which destroy other people as well as ourselves, we learn to "do good unto all men" (Gal. 6:10; see also Tit. 3:1-3). The Golden Rule is premised on the value of each life made in God's image and results in service to our fellowmen: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12).

The more our society diminishes respect for God and the Bible, the more it diminishes respect for each person made in God's image and the principle of serving others. In this context, self and selfishness grow larger and larger. A dog-eat-dog, do-whatever-it-takes-to-satisfy-self mentality

replaces the ideal of service to others. We begin to see other people not in terms of their true value but in terms of our own ego: how we can use and manipulate them to serve our own desires. Rather than serving others, we misuse and abuse them to our own ends. Man thus becomes a brute beast, a monster of his own making.

Ultimately, the clash over morality goes back to our first principles or worldview. The view that man is created by God in the image of God includes an "ethos of self-control" and a mind-set of service to our fellowman, whereas the view that man is an evolved animal among animals results in an "ethos of self-expression" and a selfish animal-like outlook on our fellowman.¹⁵ The latter view is constantly gaining ground in American culture. Many people are trying to hold onto moral principles based "on the moral capital of prior religious generations" while looking for a secular foundation to replace the Bible.¹⁶ This experiment is failing, and is doomed to fail utterly like all before it in the history of man. It is an impossible enterprise.

Many people are trying to hold onto moral principles based "on the moral capital of prior religious generations" while looking for a secular foundation to replace the Bible.

Faithful Saints: Beacons of Light

As the darkness deepens and the battle rages over the value of life, a sober mind, sexual purity, honesty, and service to our fellowman, faithful saints fighting the good fight of faith shine brighter and brighter. Our distinctive life makes us "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13-16). In order to have this wholesome influence, we must not compromise with the world's eroding standards. Every compromise will hobble us and dim the light of truth.

Let us answer God's call, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins" (Rev. 18:4). Let us rally to the battle cry, "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). The battle lines are clearly drawn. There can be no retreat, no surrender. Let us fulfill the Great Commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that

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believeth not shall be damned” (Mk. 16:15-16). Rather than complaining about what the world is coming to, let us proclaim that Christ has come to save the world from darkness and sin. He will be victorious in the end and his saints will receive the reward of their faithfulness, “even the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet. 1:9). Our Lord says, “Surely I will come quickly,” and we say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

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Endnotes

¹ Robert H. Bork, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline*, 61.

² Marybeth T. Hagan, “Violating rights of unborn,” Opinion section, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, posted Jan. 22, 2008 at philly.com; Hagan authored *Abortion: A Mother’s Plea for Maternity and the Unborn*.

³ Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 2nd ed., 191, see 175-217. The 1st ed. (1979) says “defective infant” (p. 138).

⁴ W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, IV: 44.

⁵ Driver Education Specialists, American Automobile Association, Washington, D.C., *Teacher’s Handbook for Sportsmanlike Driving*, Fifth Ed., 71.

⁶ Sources: NIDA Report, the Scientific American and Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario. Also see Alcohol Consumption and Mortality, Alcohol poisoning deaths, Center for Disease

Control report; see <http://come-over.to/FAS/alcdeath.htm>.

⁷ Bork, 35.

⁸ Bork, 50.

⁹ Medical Editor, “Out of Wedlock - Over Half of First Babies,” *MedicineNet.com*, Mar. 14, 2008; <http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=11011>.

¹⁰ “Nearly 4 in 10 U.S. babies born out of wedlock,” AP release, Nov. 21, 2006; <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15835429/>.

¹¹ “Heavy Petting” by Peter Singer, review of Midas Dekkers, *Dearest Pet: On Bestiality*, transl. Paul Vincent; <http://www.nerve.com/Opinions/Singer/heavyPetting/>.

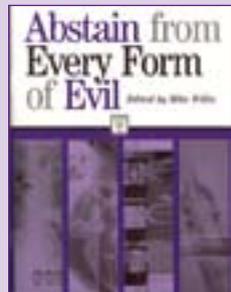
¹² “The Ethics of American Youth: 2002,” report of nationwide survey of high school students by Josephson Institute Center for Youth Ethics, posted at <http://charactercounts.org/programs/reportcard/2002/index.html>.

¹³ David Callahan, “A Better Way to Prevent Cheating,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 8, 2006, posted at <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0508/p09s02-coop.html>. Callahan’s work is all the more notable because he is a liberal. He authored such books as *The Cheating Culture: Why More Americans Are Doing Wrong to Get Ahead*. For more information on Callahan’s work, see <http://www.cheatingculture.com/>.

¹⁴ Callahan, “Workplace Theft,” posted at <http://www.cheatingculture.com/workplacetheft.htm>.

¹⁵ Bork, 273.

¹⁶ Bork, 275.

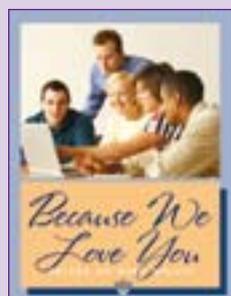


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a clash about marriage

JOHN GENTRY

In a recent Bible class, an elderly gentleman stated that when he was a young man he knew of only two couples who were divorced among the Lord's people. Today one would be hard pressed to find a congregation of the Lord's people that did not have at least two couples affected in some way by divorce. And I dare say that there is not a family, Christians or not, in the United States that has not been adversely affected by a loose approach toward marriage, divorce and remarriage. Our culture once stood on biblical principles of life and morality, but now our culture is at odds with such principles—we have a clash in our culture about marriage.

A Clash About Living Together (Cohabiting) Before Marriage

While some marriage counselors and “experts” will advise people not to live together before getting married, the reality is that in our culture many people do cohabit before getting married or as an alternative to marriage. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2006 there were more than 6 million “unmarried-partner households” in the U.S. In another study it was found that

Cohabitation, once rare, is now the norm: The researchers found that more than half (54 percent) of all first marriages

between 1990 and 1994 began with unmarried cohabitation. They estimate that a majority of young men and women of marriageable age today will spend some time in a cohabiting relationship (Scommegna).

And a 2006 report on cohabitation stated, “Unmarried sex, cohabitation, and childbearing have increased dramatically over the past 40 years and are now common—if not normative—components of family life in the U.S. and other Western industrialized countries” (Musick).

Different reasons are put forth as rationale for people living together before getting married. However, at the core of cohabitation are a decrease in the appreciation of marriage and an increase in the depreciation of sexual intimacy. Both reasons are the direct result of a growing discontentment and disconnection from the Word of God.

When we study what God's Word says concerning living together before marriage, it is clear we have a clash of cultures. As mentioned, sex is at the root, or is at least a big part, of why people decide to live together before getting married. When answering a certain question for the Corinthians, Paul penned, “Now concerning the things of which you wrote: It is good for a man not to cohabit¹ with a woman. But, because of fornication, each

man should have his own wife and each woman should have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:1-2, orig.). The Hebrew writer stated, “Marriage should be held in honor among all people, and the marriage bed should be undefiled, for God will judge the fornicators and adulterers” (Heb. 13:4, orig.). These passages both teach that sex before marriage is a sin.

Because another lesson in this series is dealing with sex, I will stop with these two passages. However, this point needs to be included in this lesson because of its direct connection with the clash about marriage in our culture with the Word of God.

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A Clash About Marriage

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A Clash About Who To Marry

Another area in which our culture clashes with God's Word concerning marriage is the choice of a spouse. Most people in our society are not very concerned with whom they marry. Nearly always in our society someone chooses a mate based on outside beauty or some other superficial reason.

The Christian, however, should be concerned more with the inner beauty of a person and the impact or effect that person will have on their eternal dwelling. God told his people under the Old Law that when one of them married someone who was not a child of God his heart would be turned from serving God to serve other gods; such a practice would then kindle the anger of God (Deut. 7:3-4; see also Judg. 3:6-7; 1 Kings 11:1-6ff; Neh. 13:23-27). Under the New Law, Paul recognized the difficulty of a Christian being married to a non-Christian (1 Cor. 7:12-16). The principle seen in the Old Testament passages above did not change under the New Law, for Paul said on another occasion that "evil companions corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). Paul also gave us the example of the apostles having wives who were Christians (1 Cor. 9:5).

Other passages and principles could be given. It is sad to think that an explanation must be presented for a faithful Christian needing to marry a faithful Christian, but,

unfortunately, many Christians have been affected by our culture to the point that this is a difficult principle for them to grasp. Someone has rightly said, "A Christian who chooses to marry a non-Christian

does not understand Christianity, does not understand marriage, or both!"

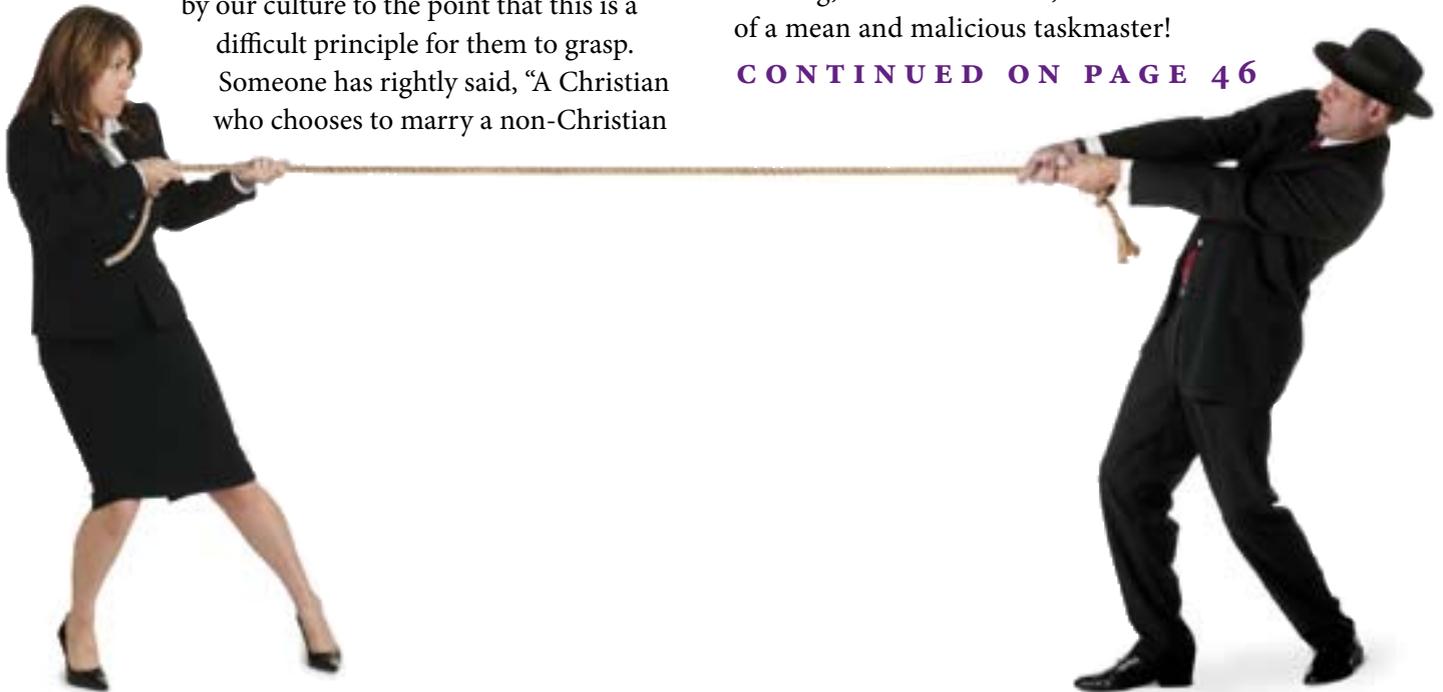
A Clash About Responsibilities In Marriage

Over the last several decades the god of this world has been very busy in deceiving our culture into thinking that the role and responsibilities of the wife are the same as the husband. Many people in our culture, and unfortunately in the Lord's church, equate a discussion or presentation of the differences in responsibilities of the husband and wife with a demoralizing and demeaning attack against the equality of women with men. Satan has so twisted and thwarted the thinking of even Christians that, without exception, every time I have presented a lesson or written an article on the need for a wife to obey her husband (Tit. 2:5; Gen. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18;

The Bible very clearly teaches the equality of men and women. And it just as clearly teaches there are differences in their roles and responsibilities.

1 Pet. 3:1-5) at least one person has approached me and stated something similar to this: "But that doesn't give the husband the right to beat his wife." It is as if God's teaching on the responsibilities of the wife somehow negates the husband's responsibilities and makes her equal to a dog, a beast of burden, or some slave in the hands of a mean and malicious taskmaster!

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A Clash About Marriage

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The Bible very clearly teaches the equality of men and women (Gal. 3:28; Gen. 1:27; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11). And it just as clearly teaches there are differences in their roles and responsibilities. We do not have space in this lesson to go into detail regarding these responsibilities. In addition to the many passages that discuss general responsibilities of the Christian to other people, here is a list of passages associated specifically with the husband and the wife:



Husband: Prov. 5:15-19; 31:28; Matt. 19:4-6; 1 Cor. 7:3-5, 10-11; 11:3; Eph. 5:23-33; Col. 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:7.

Wife: Gen. 3:16; Prov. 31:10-31; 1 Cor. 7:3-5, 10-11; 14:35; Eph. 5:22-24, 33; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11-15; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:1-6.

A Clash About Resolving Conflicts In Marriage

Most people in our culture do not love their neighbors as themselves (cf. Matt. 22:39). Greed, selfishness, and a general lack of love is common place in the lives of many people. These same attitudes are also manifested in marriages, especially during times of conflict. Instead of looking out for the best interest of the other person or the best interest of the family, many are only concerned with *número uno*.

Jesus' teaching about loving one another was a new and difficult concept to many then and is such for many today (consider Matt. 5:43-48; John 13:34-35). As we study the responsibilities of Christians toward others we learn that we are to love one another with an unselfish and sacrificial love (1 Cor. 13:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John

3:14-18); we are to put the interests of others above our own (Rom. 15:1-3; 1 Cor. 10:24; Phil. 2:2-5); we are to pursue peace and edification (Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:29; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 12:14); and we are to be forbearing and forgiving of one another (Eph. 4:1-3, 31-32; Col. 3:12-13; 1 Pet. 3:8-9). While these responsibilities are directed toward our relationships with fellow Christians or with our neighbors, when these principles are applied in a marriage by both spouses all conflicts can be resolved, or prevented, in a way that is pleasing to God.

Additionally, the Bible teaches that a wife is not to nag her husband (Prov. 21:9, 19; 27:15) and that the husband is not to deal harshly with his wife (Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:7).

A Clash About Fidelity

It is shocking how many people have been unfaithful to their spouse. It is difficult to put a number on the percentage of husbands and wives that have been involved or are involved in an adulterous relationship. The most recent numbers that I have found show that there is very little difference in the percentages of men versus women. It is suggested that around half of all husbands and wives

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A Clash About Marriage

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have been or are involved in an adulterous relationship (for various statistics, simply google “adultery stats”). One report even suggests that as many as 80% of all marriages have been affected by adultery (Vaughan). The Lord’s church is not immune to infidelity. Within the last two years four or five preachers known to me have been involved in affairs (one was even a mentor of mine).

As many as 80% of all marriages have been affected by adultery.

Keeping sex in its God-given realm, which is in a scriptural marriage, has been a problem that has plagued mankind since the beginning. In the book of Genesis we read of several accounts of fornication and infidelity. Through the rest of the Old Testament we see nations as a whole, including the Israelites at various times, given over to fornication as a form of worshipping their idols. In the New Testament we read of homosexuality (Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11), incest (1 Cor. 5:1), orgies (1 Pet. 4:3, cf. ESV) and other forms of fornication. Since the close of the New Testament many other societies have come and gone and involved themselves in such sinfulness. In our own country people began taking their clothes off in public in the 1800s (see Pollard) and it has digressed from there to the point where nakedness, sexual promiscuity, and fornication, including homosexuality and even adultery, are a common and

normal part of our media and entertainment. There is hardly a sitcom or drama on television today that does not contain such filth, and the movies are even worse. Books, periodicals and the internet are also filled with the same filth. I could continue, but the point is this: we live in a sex saturated society. Our society says, if it feels good do it, and our culture claims we should be happy. If that means we think we would be happier with another man or woman, so be it. Some even dare to blaspheme by saying, “God wants me to be happy” thinking then that he approves of their adulterous relationship. Some of our own brethren have been promoting heresy that attempts to make provision for adulterous relationships by saying the teachings of Jesus and the apostles regarding marriage is only kingdom law, baptism washes away marriages, that adultery is any form of covenant breaking (therefore freeing someone to remarry), and other false teachings that fit their particular circumstances or the circumstances of someone they know.

What saith the Scripture? Fornicators deserve to die (Rom. 1:29-32, KJV). Fornicators and adulterers will not go to heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Fornication and adultery are works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21, cf. KJV). Fornicators have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God (Eph. 5:5). Fornicators and adulterers God will judge (Heb. 13:4). Fornicators have their part in the lake that burns with fire, which is the second death (Rev. 21:8). Fornicators will not be allowed into heaven, but will remain on the outside (Rev. 22:15).

The Word of God also encourages husbands to be intoxicated with the wife of their youth, to be filled by her breasts and to be completely satisfied by her at all times visually, mentally, emotionally and physically (Prov. 5:15-23). Be as Job and make a covenant with your eyes that you will not gaze upon another woman (Job 31:1; cf. Matt. 5:27-30)!

A Clash About Divorce

A couple of years ago I overheard Dr. Phil say that, if a person was not happy in his marriage, then he needed to get out of it. Last year I saw Matt Lauer

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A Clash About Marriage

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interviewing an author of a new book on marriage, divorce and remarriage. She, too, stated that when a person gets to the point in his marriage where he is no longer happy then he needs to get out of it. Both reasoned that it was destructive to a person's emotional, mental, and even physical health to stay in an unhappy marriage. It is no longer unusual for someone to get married three or four times during his life. Sadly, like cohabitation, divorce has become a normal part of our society. As mentioned earlier, nearly every congregation of the Lord's people in this country has been affected by divorce. And many of our brethren are working hard to find new ways to allow for divorce.

While our culture says divorce is okay or even good, the Lord says, "I hate divorce" (Mal. 2:16, NASU). Paul charged the married, "the wife should not separate from her husband...and the husband should not divorce his wife" (1 Cor. 7:10-11, ESV). Jesus said, "What God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19:6, ESV). A husband and wife once bound or joined together by God are bound for life (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39).

No amount of expert research or testimony can change the teaching of God. It is not okay to divorce your spouse for just any reason or because you are no longer happy with him or her (cf. Matt. 19:3-12). God's plan is one man for one woman for life.

A Clash About Remarriage

Closely connected with our culture's view regarding divorce is its view regarding remarriage. Indeed a primary reason for divorce in our culture is remarriage. Our culture gives virtually no thought to God's teaching regarding divorce and remarriage. If you are unhappy with your current spouse, just get a new one. It matters not how many times you or the person you want to marry has been married. It is not unusual for someone to be in their third or fourth marriage. Many "families" are now made up of step-parents, step-children, half-siblings, and a host of other "connections" that make identifying one's relationship with someone increasingly difficult. Most of the time this is the result of an unscriptural concept of marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

In contrast to this view of our culture, God's word is very clear about remarriage. "Whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Matt. 5:32 ESV). "Whoever

divorces his wife...and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Matt. 19:9, ESV w/marg.). "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" (Mark 10:11-12, ESV). "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery" (Luke 16:18, ESV). "She will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive" (Rom. 7:3, ESV).

The only person who can get remarried according to God's will is (1) the person whose spouse has died (Rom. 7:3-4; 1 Cor. 7:39), (2) the person who puts away his or her spouse for fornication (Matt. 5:32; 19:9) or (3) the person who was married to someone that did not have the right to be married. In this third case the two were never bound in the sight of God. Such a marriage is an unscriptural marriage and they must, therefore, get a divorce. At this point the person who did have the right to be married but was never bound by God to the other person in the first marriage would have the right to get remarried (cf. Matt. 19:4-6; Rom. 7:2-3).

Conclusion

God's law regarding marriage is simple—one man for woman for life. Our culture, and unfortunately many Christians, has made it complicated. There is an ever growing clash between our culture and God's word regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Joshua told God's people of old that they must choose between the gods of their culture or the Lord God (Josh. 24:14-15). As Christians we cannot make decisions based on the current culture. We must take our stand on the Word of God.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world...is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever (1 John 2:15-17, ESV).

Endnotes

¹ There seems to be two approaches to understanding the meaning of *haptomai* in this verse. One approach says *gunaikos haptomai* is an idiom that means to marry a woman (for which see Louw-Nida 34.70, Robertson, Vincent, Barnes, Clarke, *et al*).

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Several, certainly not all, of the more recent and more idiomatic English translations follow this approach. To be fair, this is not entirely out of line with the context (cf. vv. 6, 8). However, as of this writing, I have found only one reference to a primary source the context of which supposedly favors this meaning, namely Xenophon in *Cyropaedia* (Barnes). The other approach says this gloss of the word *hupto*, to touch, is euphemistically used to denote "carnal copulation" (Gill) or "cohabitation" (Thayer) with a woman. In this sense it would be similar to the Hebrew *ng'* (Gen. 20:6; Prov. 6:29; cf. LXX and Vulgate) or the Latin *tangere* (1 Cor. 7:1, Vulgate). In Thayer and BDAG there are several primary sources cited to establish this usage of *haptomai* (for which see). This would also seem to better fit the immediate context of v. 2.

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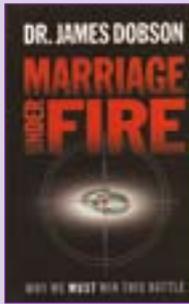
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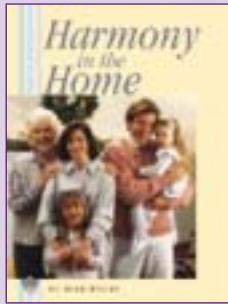


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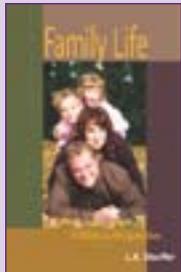


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a clash about beauty

TOM M. ROBERTS

“Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised” (Prov. 31:30).

Throughout history, beautiful women have been objects of adoration. Physical beauty has spawned poems, songs, wars, and legends. It was Helen of Troy whose “face launched a thousand ships.” Or was it Aphrodite? We read of Cleopatra, the Queen of Sheba, Elizabeth Taylor, Kim Novak, and others of past years. More recently, the list would include Britanny Spears, Paris Hilton, Jennifer Lopez, etc. Beauty sells movie tickets and trashy magazines. Each generation has had its own sex goddesses and no doubt this will continue as long as the world lasts.

While it is impossible to accurately describe the exact dimensions of a “beautiful” woman (“beauty is in the eyes of the beholder”), they would include the symmetry of face, texture of skin, shape of body, color of eyes and hair, and that intangible way in which all these attributes merge together into a pleasing presence that attracts and entrances most males. But have you noticed that so far, the description of beauty is only skin deep? Is that all there is to beauty? And is physical beauty the only attraction by which a man judges the value of a woman who appeals to him? Would it be appropriate to attend beauty contests to find a wife? Would marrying the

most beautiful woman in a beauty pageant guarantee that she would be a faithful wife, an excellent mother, a trustworthy person, a woman of faith and spirituality? The proper answers to those questions prove that there has to be, and there are, other attributes than physical beauty that contribute toward the total personality of a person. If there are exterior qualities of beauty, there must also be inward qualities of beauty which are often overlooked in the search for a mate.

The Bible describes a person as a spiritual being with a physical body (1 Cor. 15:42-44; 2 Cor 5:1-4). While a physical body has a short life-span, the spiritual man will live forever (Heb. 9:27; John 4:13-14; Matt. 25:46). Outward beauty can be immediately recognized; it may take longer to appreciate inward beauty.

As we have described the attributes of a “beautiful” woman, let’s see what comprises a “beautiful” spirit. We would immediately reject one as beautiful who is mean, spiteful, hateful, contrary, slanderous, a liar, gossipy, vengeful, double-dealing, or having loose morals. Such things are described as “works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19-21). But the same chapter describes the “fruit of the spirit” as “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (vv. 22-23). While these things

cannot be seen by looking at one’s face, they will certainly be visible in the life of one who possesses them.

What kind of beauty are you looking for? What kind of beauty does a girl seek to project? What attracts you as a male to the opposite sex? Do you judge only by physical appearances, or do you take a longer look to see what attributes lie deeper in the personality? Of course, one can be attractive both physically and spiritually. But if you had to choose between a vain and empty, beautiful “campus queen” or a less attractive but deeply spiritual person with admirable qualities, which would it be? As a

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female, what lasting impression do you wish to leave in the minds of those who see you? What kind of clothes do you wear? Are they suggestive and immodest, appealing to the very wrong desires of a young man? How much emphasis do you put on make-up, hair styles, etc., as compared to modesty, sobriety, spirituality (1 Tim. 2:8-10)?

Please understand that this is not just a hypothetical exercise. As you mature, both boys and girls, you will be seeking a mate: a husband, a wife. Have you decided what kind of person you will seek? Can you see beyond the face and look for inner qualities that are truly beautiful? Is it only “chemistry” that interests you? Will you actively seek the right person or respond only to outward appearances. The Bible advises us that “the Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (2 Sam. 16:7).

While a beautiful painting or art object may be desired to possess simply for its beauty and to hang on a wall, a woman is a human

being, created by God to be “a help (suitable) for man” (Gen. 2:20). As such, there are qualities of men and women that complement each other, enhance one another, support and encourage one another beyond

physical beauty. The right person in your life can make it much easier to go to heaven; the wrong person can be a stumbling-block.

A football hero or a campus queen may be popular merely for the sake of their physical appearance for a few years. But time does take its toll! As the brawny chest of the hero sags into his middle-aged waist and the flawless beauty becomes lined and wrinkled as the years make their impression, those who were judged only by physical beauty will be judged more and more by what is inside than what is outside. Physical beauty becomes flawed and frayed by the issues of life. But in the heady rush of hormones, young people may not recognize the

inevitable process of aging. But we are warned: “For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes...” (Jas. 1:11).

As a concrete example of these principles, consider one of the judges of Israel, Samson, who was known for his formidable strength (Judg. 13-16). He was struck with the beauty of Delilah and, though she was a foreigner and idolater, decided that her beauty was what he wanted. His father and mother remonstrated by asking: “Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?” But Samson looked only at her outward beauty and replied: “Get her for me; for she pleases me well” (14:2-3). The Lord was able to turn this mistake of Samson into an occasion to slay the Philistines (v. 4), but Samson apparently acted out of selfish interests. Later, Delilah betrayed her husband to her people and Samson lost his great strength, was imprisoned and, ultimately died a tragic death.

While introducing the “works of the flesh” as opposed to the “fruit of the spirit” in Galatians 5, Paul warned that “the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish” (5:17). It is not just bad judgment to look at outward appearances without consideration of the inner person. It is wrong! Such a choice sows the seeds of distress and unhappiness. Samson and Delilah could never have been happy for they created a divided house which was created for human pleasure with no spiritual foundation. You, yourself, cannot have a happy marriage if it is built on the wrong foundation.

Should a Christian marry a non-Christian? If you are asking whether or not it is a sin, the answer could be “no.” It is not a sin, per se, to marry a non-Christian (1 Cor. 7:12-14). However, if a choice of a husband or wife is based solely upon physical beauty without consideration of inward qualities, I would definitely say that the choice is foolish and fraught with much danger. Have you studied the Bible together? What kind of Bible knowledge does your friend have? Are they open-minded about such study? If you marry, where will you worship? Will you

There are qualities of men and women that complement each other, enhance one another, support and encourage one another beyond physical beauty.

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worship together or separately? When the marriage is blessed with children, where will the children worship? What will they be taught? Will your spouse lead you away from the Lord's church? Will your children grow up and belong to denominationalism? Will you still love your mate when the aging process takes its toll and beauty fades? Failure to consider these dangers gave rise to the adage, "Marry in haste; repent at leisure." Sadly, many Christians have had years to regret hasty marriages made in the blush of youth without due consideration of anything except the attraction of physical beauty.

Early in the history of the world, a wrong standard for marriage began to develop. In the beginning, God's law of marriage bound a man and woman together (Gen. 2:24) and they were considerate of God's will for their lives. "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Gen. 6:1-2). This is not a fanciful myth (as some suppose) in which "sons of God" (angels) mated with human females and created a race of giants. Rather, this is a statement that men forgot the true nature of marriage and began to seek after the fairest of women rather than those who respected God. The "godly seed," those who knew and respected God became more interested in human pleasure rather than God's will and wickedness multiplied on the face of the earth. It was at this point that God decided to destroy the earth with a flood because men forgot God (vv. 5-7).

Surely, we can learn from the mistakes of the past. We can also learn from the wisdom of God's word. Physical beauty, for the sake of beauty alone, clashes with the spiritual nature of God's children. It presents a false promise, built upon a false desire, carried along by false expectations, and ends in a false relationship. Beauty alone does not promote the Christian's welfare; in fact it may inhibit it. Be sure that you have your eyes open to see the spiritual beauty as well as the physical. Remember that hindsight is 20/20 as we look back on our myopic mistakes. Will your view of beauty clash with spirituality or enhance it?

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Who Defines Beauty?

One who is a Christian is shocked at how our culture defines what is beautiful. Britney Spears shows her bare midriff with her low-cut, hip-hugging jeans and suddenly every teenager in America tries to imitate her. Immodestly exposing oneself is always sinful, regardless of what one looks like, but sometimes their imitation efforts are ludicrous because not everyone has Britney's body. Some young women have an exposed role of fat when they bare their midriff. It looks unappealing, to say the least. Most of these young women are quite attractive but their attempt to follow Hollywood's lead is misguided.

Our society's emphasis on super thin models has led to some terrible excesses. Attractive women become anorexic, trying to starve themselves into fitting America's definition of beauty. Sometimes this had led to pre-mature death, in addition to having one's grotesque image flashed on the television. Others become bulimic, vomiting out the food they have eaten to keep from gaining weight, for the sole purpose of fitting someone's artificial definition of "beauty."

All of the absurd conduct aimed at attaining and keeping a beautiful appearance is not committed by immature youth. A new business has been created known as "cosmetic surgery" in which (mostly) women are fighting an unwinnable battle with the aging process. Botox injections to smooth out the wrinkles, liposuction to remove unnecessary body fat, breast enhancement to enlarge one's bosom (or to compensate for the sagging that occurs with age), reshaping a nose that might not be "perfect," etc. are available for the rich who have more money than common sense.

When will we back away from this quest for bodily perfection (as defined by fashion gurus and Hollywood) to raise the question, "Is Hollywood's definition of beauty that to which I aspire?" Is one's self-esteem tied to what she looks like on the outside? Does one have any value if her body is different from the runway models of Paris and Milan? Will one define his self-worth using the standards of divine revelation or modern culture?

a clash about sex

LEWIS WILLIS

The church today is blessed with a large number of fine young people who have before them a lifetime of living. At the same time, we who are older have before us a huge responsibility. We must give them the proper information and instruction that will enable them to make the choices in life that will be right in the sight of God, and which will produce for them the happiness they desire. This task must not be overlooked by the parents and grandparents of these children, so these words constitute something of “A Heads-Up For Parents.”

In this article I plan to deal with some matters that are difficult to discuss. I guess the difficulty is realized because of my own background. Through the years there have been some subjects that were just not discussed in mixed crowds or before children. Fortunately, in those days it was not necessary to discuss these delicate matters; almost everyone was on the same page regarding them.

Today, time has changed our culture from its earlier innocence. Now topics that would never have been mentioned are openly and even casually discussed before both the young and old. Personally, I do not like the change, but it has happened, and we must deal with it.

Thus, in this article, I will deal with some of these “delicate” matters, and I do so with great reluctance. The last thing I want to do is offend anyone. However, the need to urge parents to realize the hard facts about the world in which they are rearing their children is too compelling to ignore. Please understand that I am trying to be careful how I say what follows.

A Grave Danger

Have you heard—are you hearing—what people are saying on the streets, on television, in newspapers, in sports, and in entertainment? Let me give you some facts that have recently come to my attention.

- Today 38% of babies are born out of wedlock (*Akron Beacon Journal*; the *Indianapolis Star* says the number is 36%.) Either number indicates that over 1/3 of babies are born out of wedlock today. The *Star* (01/24/08) stated that “about 80% of black babies are born to unwed moms” in Indianapolis today. (I suspect most of us are

aware of this problem but few of us realize how “out-of-control” this situation has become.)

- I heard a man on TV unashamedly announce that he and his girlfriend had rented them an apartment. (In my day, such comments would ruin the reputation of both young people, and would likely lead to violence from the father of the girlfriend!)
- Too frequently reports say that unmarried couples are buying houses, and they are not buying them to rent out; these couples are living together, without marrying. (Furthermore, there is absolutely no sense of shame associated with this conduct anymore.)
- I recently heard about an athlete who was being pursued by child welfare agencies in several states. It seems he has fallen behind on child support to the nine children he has fathered, so far!
- In Summit County, where the city of Akron, Ohio is located, 3,701 babies were killed by abortion in 2006 (*Akron Beacon Journal*, 01/22/08).
- In 35 years of *Roe v. Wade*, abortion has given our country 50 million dead Americans since 1973 (*Ibid*).
- *Time Magazine* (02/04/08) reports that the abortion rate dropped by 25% from 1990 to 2005. Abortion numbers declined in 2006, from 1.6 million to 1.2 million (*Akron Beacon Journal*, 01/19/08). (This only means that people in our country decided to let an additional 400,000 babies live, instead of slaughtering them.)
- A 28 year old actor, Heath Ledger, recently died of unknown causes. His death has been headline and front-page news across the country. Ledger is best known for his Oscar-nominated performance as a *gay cowboy* in the movie *Brokeback Mountain*. (He was *proud* of that role! He was delighted to display himself as a homosexual, even though the Word of God lists this sexual deviance as a cause which will prevent sinners from going to heaven [1 Cor. 6:9-10; Rom. 1:26-27]. I admit that I come from the “old-school” where such conduct was confined to the shadowy world of darkness, and it was not discussed in decent circles.

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A Clash About Sex (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53)

Today, this sin is shamelessly paraded before us, even in national politics. Can you other “old-timers” imagine with me that John Wayne or Jimmy Stewart would ever have accepted such a role in a movie?)

- Even seniors are “living together” outside of marriage, and without any sense of shame. (The excuse being given is they have to do this “because of Social Security benefits being affected if they marry.” Of course, they need the money more than they need to set a good example, or to save their own souls.)

Reports of such activity are commonplace in our time, and our young people are exposed to them everyday, just as adults are. Today, such conduct is so common that it has gained acceptance in our country. Most people see absolutely nothing wrong with this approach to life. And parents, your children won’t see anything wrong with it either, unless you teach them the truth about sex; that sex outside of marriage is a sin, as is also true of homosexuality!

God Has A Word For This Action

God’s word for the aforementioned sexual activity is “**fornication.**” These couples having children out of wedlock, even Hollywood stars and well-known athletes, are not just “living together,” **they are fornicating together.** A great

local athlete from our area has fathered two children through fornication! Perhaps if we called this sin what God calls it, such conduct would not be so acceptable in respectable society today. Calling the action fornication might send it back into the shadows, where it “used to be”!

What man is going to go on national TV and say, “My girlfriend and I are renting an apartment and we plan to **fornicate** there?” What Hollywood actress is going to be proudly announcing she and her male friend are having a baby as a result of their **fornication**? What athlete wants to be known for the children he has fathered by **fornication**? What actor wants his performance identified

as **fornication**? This sin needs to be called by its proper name, especially by God’s people!

Some Biblical Information

Following are just some of the passages to show that God has taught against the sin of fornication.

- “Mortify (“put to death,” LW) therefore your members which are upon the earth; *fornication*, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5).
- “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; *Adultery, fornication...*of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, *that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (Gal. 5:19-21).
- “Know ye not that *the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God*? Be not deceived: neither *fornicators...* shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10).
- “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; *Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication...*” (Rom. 1:28-29).

There is absolutely no way to please God while committing fornication. People, young and old, will lose their eternal souls if they commit fornication, no matter how acceptable it becomes in our society today. Our young people need this point driven home to them. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of parents to see that their children are taught this truth. The church can help by teaching the truth about the sin of fornication, as this article teaches, thus reinforcing what parents should already have taught their children. However, even if the church says nothing about it, parents still have a duty to raise their children to respect this teaching from the New Testament.

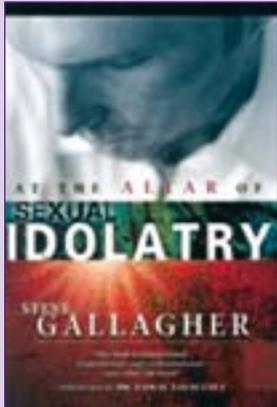
Is this a delicate subject? Absolutely! We have to be careful in discussing it. I pray that I have handled it properly in this brief article. Does this treatment of the subject cause us to pause, wondering if it should have even been addressed in the pages of this journal? Probably! Especially if our children are grown. That means, when we were growing up, such subjects were not discussed publicly.

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A Clash About Sex (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 54)

Folks, times have changed! Our culture about sex has changed radically! Children today are bombarded with this sin. You may not wish to talk about it, **but they're talking about it!** You need to awake to the reality of the times. If you parents, with open Bibles and a prayer in your heart,

don't teach them the truth on this kind of conduct, who do you suppose will teach them about it? Yes, that's right, they'll learn about it from the gynecologist who is telling them they have a baby coming. But, then it is too late to prevent this from happening. Teach them today!

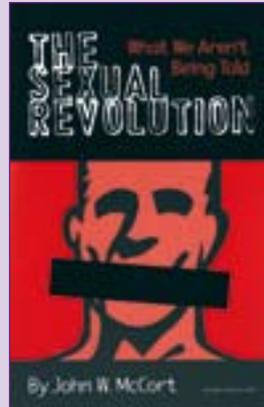


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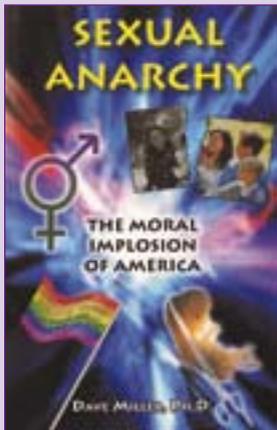


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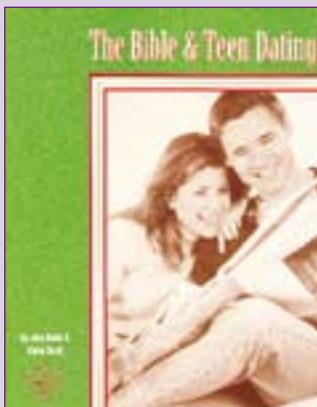


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a clash about entertainment



STEVEN DEATON

Our nation is in an ongoing cultural war. Though there have always been libertines, the real surge of immorality came about in the 1960s. It has been relentless since that time. The moral standards of the nation as a whole continue to erode with the more outlandish, sick, gory, and highly sexual being praised and accepted.

This clash of cultures is nothing new. Christians in the first century clashed with the world around them. In fact, this is the source of tension between the religion of Christ and the hedonism of the world—two cultures at war.

Paul said,

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:1-4).

The last days began in the first century and will continue till the end of time (Heb. 1:1, 2). Thus, just because Christ overcame death and established his kingdom that would advance worldwide, it did not spell the end of sin. The disciples of Christ would, do, and will come into conflict with the world (John 15:18-20).

In ancient times paganism, its temples, priests, and practices, promoted ungodliness among the masses. Today the entertainment industry serves as a “pulpit” for the hedonistic, humanistic lifestyle. Satan uses entertainment as an effective tool of evangelism. He uses every form: music, movies, magazines, TV, theatre, Internet, video games, and more. These are “fiery darts” that many people welcome, even crave (Eph. 6:10-17). There is no night of the week or time of the day when immorality and ungodliness are not “sermonized” in an “entertaining” format.

As with all other fads and fashions in society, Christians and their families are affected. Many have dropped their standards or never had their standards high enough. As such, they are not sanctified, holy, separate from the world (1 Pet. 1:13-17). Rather, by exposing themselves, even immersing themselves in worldly entertainment, they have allowed Satan to war against their souls and devour them (1 Pet. 2:11; 5:8). They do not clash, they conform (Rom. 12:1, 2).

How Bad Has This Clash Become?

In my growing up years we regularly watched television shows that were popular. This included *Dukes of Hazard*, *Three's Company*, and *M*A*S*H*. As a child I viewed these as funny and innocent. It is only now as an adult that I see what they were really all about. The hedonistic culture of Hollywood was pushing its agenda. Daisy Duke had her super short shorts. She, her brothers, an uncle, and others had no problem breaking the law. The police were pictured as stupid, bumbling ignoramuses. On *Three's Company* a man lived with two women. His landlord only

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allowed it because he thought Jack was a homosexual. It was a highly sexualized show, but portrayed as a big joke; lots of fun. *M*A*S*H* pictured the “conservative” in the group as a prude, cruel, narrow-minded, hypocritical, and selfish individual. The hero of the show was always looking to bed a nurse and for some “hooch” from the in-tent still. Nowadays, those shows are relatively pure by comparison.

Today we have shows that thirty years ago would have been deemed nothing short of pornographic. From the media reports about *Sex and the City*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Big Brother*, and other popular shows, it seems everyone is having sex with anyone; hetero and homo. Just to see some of the advertisements is shocking.

The hedonists work hard to portray their lifestyle as normal, happy-go-lucky, and helpful. For instance, if you have ever surfed through your cable or satellite channels, you have probably come across a show titled *The Girls Next Door*. It covers Hugh Hefner (hedonist #1 of *Playboy* fame) and his three “girlfriends.” All three of them live with him and are about one-third his age. Yet, the title is “The Girls Next Door.” It is sending the message that the average girl in your neighborhood or on your road is immodest, immoral, materialistic, and ready to jump in bed with a man her grandfather’s age. Don’t be fooled, this is not normal.

Violence has had a dramatic increase as well. There are numerous shows that highlight the gore of murder. The more graphic it is, the higher the ratings will be—or so it seems. Regular dramas depict the latest serial killer who slices and dices his victims in unimaginable ways. We have seen advertisements for a movie called *SAW IV*, which evidently is about a killer that uses a saw. Several years ago there was a movie titled *Natural Born Killers*, which inspired a real-life murder spree. These things make an impression on the mind and come out in the lives of men, women, and children (Prov. 23:7).

One of the fastest growing spectator sports is *Ultimate Fighting*. It is about as close to bare-knuckle street fighting as it comes. The object of the sport is for one man to brutally beat another man into submission or unconsciousness. Noses, arms, legs, and jaws are broken; blood spurts and spills, and the more the better. This is like the ancient gladiator games in the Roman

Colosseum. The entertainment then was to watch a man be brutalized by man or beast. The crowds were bloodthirsty and treated it all as mere sport. It was a serious money-making industry.¹ It was the product of paganism and its low moral standards. We are sliding back that way as a society.

Some of the most popular video games center on violence. Reports say some of these games contain murder and rape scenarios.

One system even has the player essentially act out a murder with the controls. Though they are “rated” there is little that stops children from gaining access to such sadistic material. Too, when did such become suitable for adults?

Do you think all of this is an accident? Some believe it is a conspiracy. However, conspiracy implies some level of secrecy. The purveyors of perversion make no secret about it. They want to push the envelope in every area of morality; it’s a badge of honor—it’s an agenda.

Rebecca Hagelin of The Heritage Foundation wrote about “Agenda-driven Entertainment.”² She tells of a successful sitcom writer that pitched clean, family entertainment to various studios. He was continually turned down. Finally, he asked one of them what they wanted.

Kevin Plunkett, director of programming and development for the Fox Family Channel, looked at me and said, “I want you to create a show like ‘Action.’”

Now, “Action” was a filthy prime-time sitcom that had words bleeped out on every episode. It was written and created by Chris Thompson. I know Chris well—I was a staff writer for *House Rules*, also his creation.

Chris is a bad boy—even to the malcontent sitcom writers of Hollywood. He does what he pleases and breaks every rule. “Action” was written with HBO in mind, but the main Fox network wanted it and got it. Chris refused to do the show unless he could push every envelope, and Fox said that’s fine.

So here I was, being asked to create something similar for the Fox Family Channel.

The purveyors of perversion make no secret about it. They want to push the envelope in every area of morality; it’s a badge of honor—it’s an agenda.

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A Clash About Entertainment (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 57)

In another article by Hagelin, she cites a statistic that “70 percent of youth ages 15 to 17 reported accidentally coming across pornography online, and 23 percent of those youth said this happens ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ often.”³ The California State University, Northridge, article on Television and Health states that the “number of violent acts seen by age 18 [is] 200,000.”⁴ All of this is no accident, it is done by design. There are forces in our nation that are bent on destroying moral standards.

Who Sets The Standard?

For the most part, the standard in the entertainment industry is set by Hollywood. Who is in Hollywood? There are actors that jump from bed to bed and marriage to marriage (Heb. 13:4); who put plant and animal life above human life (Rom. 1:18-32; Gen. 1:26-28); who mock and ridicule religion, unless it is from the Far East (New Age) or Middle East (Muslim); who use every form of vulgar language and see no problem with taking their clothes off and exposing themselves on screen and off (Eph. 5:1-7; Gal. 5:19-21). The main task of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the organization that determines moving ratings (G, PG, PG-13, R, etc.) is to protect the artistic and intellectual property copyrights of the industry, not ensure a rigid moral standard is used in rating movies. Its members include the studios that produce the films. So, is this the case of the fox watching the hen house? Here is the point: When Hollywood with all its immorality is the one policing the product, there is a very poor product produced.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is supposed to regulate the public airwaves (broadcast TV and radio). It has taken some notable action in the last several years, perhaps the most famous dealing with Janet Jackson’s fiasco at the Super Bowl. However, it falls far short of what godliness would require. Many curse words are permitted on the public airwaves, and even if “curse” words are not used, every form of perversity is allowed to be described and

discussed. When the FCC does move, there is a great cry about infringement on the First Amendment that protects “free speech.”

The truth of the matter is this, if enough people in our nation had the moral conviction to reject the filth coming out of Hollywood and broadcast on the airwaves, it would virtually disappear. Really, society at large sets the standard. But here is where we get into a “catch 22” situation. As more and more filth is put out and consumed, the lower the morals of society fall; the more they seek to be stimulated by grosser forms of immorality.

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A Clash About Entertainment (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 58)

It is a spiral downward into the abyss of sin from which there is very little hope of recovery. "But evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13).

Further, there is the problem of everyday living. The standard of society on many issues is quite low. To many of our neighbors, it is entertaining to go to a gambling boat or casino. Christians will sometimes make this argument: "Gambling is just another form of entertainment like going golfing or fishing. I only use money that I can afford to spend, so I spend it on going to the casino instead of the fishing hole." What happens if you win? You take from others what they did not want you to have, a violation of "love your neighbor" (Matt. 22:39). Too, what kind of example are you setting when you are in the casino? Do your actions say, "I am a Christian" or do they scream "I am like the world"? Ever talk to anyone about Christ, the church, heaven, or salvation on the river boat?

The world also sees a day at the beach in their underwear (swimsuits) as fun and games. No thought is given to modesty (2 Tim. 2:9, 10). Likewise, many entertainment activities center on alcohol, others on dancing (1 Pet. 4:3, 4; Gal. 5:19-21). The world sees no problem with these things and ridicules those who do.

Christians Need To Continue Clashing With The Entertainment Culture

The standard for the Christian ought to be morals found in God's Word. We must protect our hearts and minds (Prov. 4:23; Mark 7:20-23). The Holy Spirit commands us to think on that which is pure (Phil. 4:8). If we are diligent about this, we will reject the corrosive entertainment culture of our society. As we do, we will clash with the world around us.

Let your voice be heard. Fight the good fight (1 Tim. 6:12). Complain to the broadcast stations and networks. Write your representatives that are supposed to suppress evil and uphold good (Rom. 13:1-7). Contact the advertisers and tell them just what you think of them endorsing trash. Talk to your friends, family, and neighbors. Make an impact by being salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16).

Endnotes

¹ For more on the gladiators see: <http://abacus.bates.edu/~mimber/Rciv/gladiator.htm> and http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/gladiators_01.shtml.

² *Agenda-driven Entertainment*. Rebecca Hagelin. 3 Dec. 2004. The Heritage Foundation. 27 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed120304a.cfm>>

³ *Mom and dad, where are you?* Rebecca Hagelin. 8 Aug. 2006. The Heritage Foundation. 28 Feb. 2008. <<http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed080806a.cfm>>

⁴ *Television and Health*.



Think Before You Look: Avoiding the Consequences of Secret Temptation

by Daniel Henderson

Avoid the consequences of secret temptation. The sea of pornography is drowning millions of young and middle-aged men. Research shows that 60% of Christian men are addicted to pornography. Most are naive and unprepared as they journey into the attractive but cloudy waters. The best approach to helping men with this struggle is to give them strong preventive tools. This book provides a useful and timeless approach to avoiding the temptations of pornography before it is too late. Each chapter explains practical rationale and biblical basis for steering clear of pornography's clutches. 172 pages, paperback.

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a clash about success

RANDY BLACKABY

Success is a universal ambition. Our happiness, sense of self-worth, and motivations are tied to our perceptions of success. The opposite of success is failure. And who wants to be a failure? Yet, great confusion exists about what constitutes success.

This confusion is rooted in the dynamic conflict of two views of reality. This stems from the fact human beings are unique in all creation, bearing dual natures, one physical, the other spiritual (Gen. 2:26-27, 3:7; Rom. 7:18-23). The clash arises from a failure to integrate the two, to allow the physical to be led by the spiritual and not vice versa.

This classic clash is one backdrop of all biblical history. It is a major impetus for Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount and much other teaching.

The culture that defines success entirely in physical, material, and self-centered accomplishments is and has been the dominant standard. Despite its failure to bring any significant success satisfaction, it still dominates.

The culture of God ordained, spiritually directed, righteousness-oriented achievement has been the

more narrowly accepted approach since the beginning of time.

More frustrating has been a bifurcated approach that seeks to divide life into two distinct sectors to achieve dual but separate senses of success. This is the preferred approach of religious people not fully committed to Christ but who acknowledge the limitations and failures of the culture of worldliness. Jesus clearly asserted the corruption of this presumed middle ground, saying, "You cannot serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24).

Since success in life really does define whether our existence has been worthwhile or wasted, it is important to set the models of success side by side and decide which is truly meaningful when life is over and human and divine analysis or judgment is rendered.

Worldly Values

The world associates a successful life with material wealth, status, recognition, fame, and power. Children are trained in public education primarily for these goals. Athletic training has become less about developing a healthy body than the potential for multi-million dollar careers and fame. Even marriage, church selection, and choice of friends often are tied to achievement of this form of success.

In this model, being rich is virtually equivalent to being successful. Great value is placed on the things, experiences, comforts, and accolades that wealth can provide. On the other hand, if a person isn't intelligent enough or ambitious enough, he is "poor" and a failure in a multitude of ways. Health and wealth gospels support this worldly view.

This approach is intrinsically selfish or self-centered. Thus, it is a virtual petri dish for culturing sins of all sorts, from theft to extortion, gambling, lying, and even murder.

It is heavily focused on assessments other human beings make of our life. Often possession isn't as important as

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A Clash About Success (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 60)

perception. Folks obsess about whether they are viewed successful. Happiness, even when it doesn't materialize, is continuously viewed as a by-product of materialistic success.

Heavenly Values

Some of Jesus' earliest preaching taught the foolishness and failings of any view of success or happiness focused merely on the material and judged only by the approval of fellow men. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus began by asserting that blessedness (receiving the greatest rewards, happiness, or success) is achieved by the inculcation of spiritual characteristics that simultaneously reject human and personal standards of judgment, focus of adoption of divine thinking and behavior, and willingly accept temporal rejection (failure) to achieve righteousness (a spiritual success).

The Lord continued, as recorded in Matthew 5, to describe the elements of success:

- Being objective, living influencers of righteousness in a sinful world
- Living a standard of righteousness more than skin deep, that entails mind and motive as well as external behavior
- Keeping God and God's will at the center of living, letting his judgment be the ultimate measure of success, not what our fellow men conclude
- Making capital and time investments in "heavenly" assets, not in earthly treasures
- Understanding that spiritual success takes a singleness of purpose and allegiance
- Trusting God to provide the physical, earthly necessities if we wholeheartedly commit to achieving his righteousness and advancing his kingdom
- Accepting that citizenship in Christ's kingdom, now and in the timelessness of eternity, is the only true success

The Apostle Paul spent considerable effort in his preaching and writing emphasizing the need to "walk" according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh (Rom. 8:1-25). He addressed success in ultimate terms, including being made free from the law of sin and death, true life and peace, resurrected life freed from corruption,

adoption as children of God, and thus heirs of the glories of heaven.

Jesus' Further Teaching

Many of Jesus' parables and other public teaching highlighted these same principles. His exchange with the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16-30) challenged the man seeking ultimate success (eternal life) to disengage himself from trust in material riches and achieve his goal through total trust in God.

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) demonstrates how God expects us to be successful in using our physical talents, opportunities, economic assets, and time to further his purposes. When done, we shall be declared successful and faithful, rewarded and made happy, and given an ultimate promotion.

Jesus reduced to a nutshell both the challenge and scope of human success in his summary of God's demands. "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31).

God's Success Model Completely Inverts Worldly Standards

As we just noted, the earthly standard focuses primarily on "me," while heavenly achievement is focused on how we serve God and our fellow man. There are no easy ways to success, no shortcuts or less challenging ways. The way is narrow and difficult (Matt. 7:14). It entails reversal of our basic instincts, even to the point of loving our enemies, doing good to others even if we get no reciprocity, accepting unfair persecution and perhaps even premature physical death (Luke 6:27-35).

A religiosity devoid of real goodness is not divinely deemed success. Again, Jesus hammered that fact again and again

God expects us to be successful in using our physical talents, opportunities, economic assets and time to further his purposes.

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in his denunciation of the Pharisees and illustrated it in his story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-36).

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) demonstrates how presumed earthly success gets completely upended at death. The “successful” rich man ends up the ultimate failure and Lazarus the ultimate success.

In the story of the rich fool, Jesus demonstrates the folly of a success strategy that doesn’t contemplate or analyze the impact of death. So, when the rich man dies, God says, “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?” So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:20-21).

For those seeking fame or acclaim, Jesus also inverts the accepted foundation for success. When his disciples were arguing about who would be “greatest” in the kingdom, Jesus replied, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.”

True Success Won't Be Known Until Christ's Judgment

While a variety of blessings accrue on this earth as a result of working toward kingdom goals, the ultimate analysis of success or failure in human life won't be seen until the final judgment.

But with the eye of faith and the confidence trust provides, we can receive short-term reassurance of success simply knowing we are pleasing God. But the true rewards, wealth and affirmations of our success come when Christ judges the world at the end of the ages.

Jesus Is Our Success Model

In analyzing true success, we must keep the earthly life of Jesus as our model. He can't be called successful in a worldly way. He was virtually born in a barn to poor parents, raised as a mere craftsman's son. He lived his whole life without owning anything significant materially. His career was short-lived, full of suffering and abuse. Almost everything he taught and held dear was rejected in his lifetime and he was executed as a criminal. What followers he had abandoned him in his time of need and he was the object of great hatred and scorn.

Yet, he did the Father's will, perfectly. When his work was completed, he declared, “It is finished” (John 19:30). He did that work by forgetting himself and serving God and man. Thus, God raised him from the dead, set him at His own right hand in heaven and gave him a name above every other (Acts 5:31; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Phil. 2:9; Heb. 1:3, 10:12). Jesus demonstrated undeniably that a person's success is directly related to their purpose in life or mission.

Jesus demonstrated undeniably that a person's success is directly related to their purpose in life or mission.

A Book Full of Unlikely Success Stories

The Bible is crammed with unlikely success stories, each deserving careful study and analysis by anyone trying to achieve their maximum potential. A few of these include:

- Noah, who defied conventional wisdom to save his small household—and a remnant of humanity so the world and God's plans could continue
- Abraham, who faithfully believed God's promises well beyond the point where they made any human sense, but became the father of a great nation through which the whole world was blessed in Christ
- Joseph, sold into slavery by his hateful brothers, by faithful righteousness was raised up to be the second most powerful man in the greatest nation of his day
- Moses, left the luxury and power of Egypt to be a vagabond, deliverer of God's people and type of the Christ
- David, a mere shepherd boy, was empowered to slay Goliath and set upon the throne of Israel, then promised that through his offspring the Christ would come
- Solomon, who humbly asked for wisdom, was given unimaginable wealth and glory and a kingdom unsurpassed in history
- Daniel, a captive in Babylon, by his faith rose to be the second and third greatest authority in two of the greatest world kingdoms of history
- Esther, a captive who by God's providence was raised to be queen of Persia, saved the Jews from extermination and kept alive the lineage of the Savior

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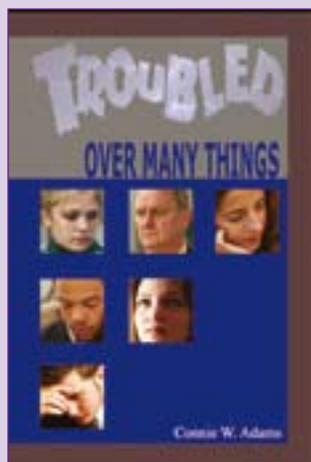
- Fishermen, tax collectors, and persecutors of Christ, like Peter and John and Paul, “turned the world upside down” in one generation through preaching the gospel

Should Christians Seek to Succeed?

Every Christian should seek success. We should have ambitions. To do otherwise is to commit to mediocrity and failure. But Jesus calls us to real and lasting success. Our ambitions must be higher than earth level, focused on more

than the flesh and centered on doing the will of God.

All roads to success must have goals. Our goals must be different. And that will forever put our model of success in permanent clash with the dominant world view. But our very purpose, and thus avenue to success, is to be a salt and light influence in a world of darkness. The existence of the clash of cultures defines the very need for our success.



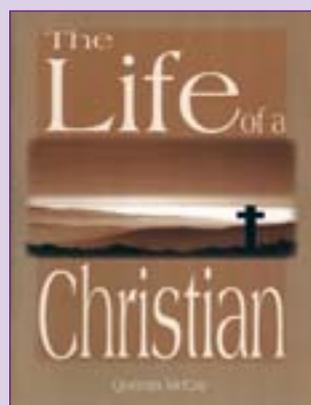
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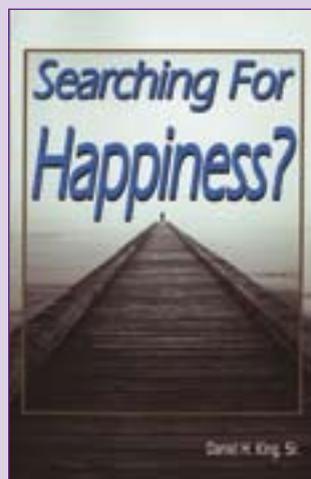


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a clash about death and funerals

MARK MAYBERRY

Introduction

Materialism today reigns supreme, but with a thin veneer of mysticism and ill-defined spirituality. Modern culture appropriates the language of Scripture, but denies its literalness, retaining the symbols of Christianity, while rejecting its substance.

Consider, for example, the New Testament triumvirate of “faith, hope and love.” Faith in God and his Holy Word has been supplanted by ignorance and unbelief. Hope, with its biblical emphasis on the future realization of divine promises, has been supplanted by temporal expectations. Love, with its biblical emphasis on selflessness and sacrificial service, has been supplanted by self-seeking and sensuality.

Modern man lacks faith. Accordingly, many funeral services are purely secular affairs. Survivors remember the one who has died, but steadfastly avoid any consideration of the Creator. Secularists no longer acknowledge the spiritual realities of life, death, resurrection, and the judgment; nor do they engage in proper remembrance, show proper respect, or evidence proper reflection or resolve.

Modern man lacks hope. Standing at the graveside, contemplating the death of a loved one, he no longer anticipates a heavenly hereafter, but assures himself, “The deceased will live forever in my heart.” Yet, such promises rely upon memory, which inevitably fades and fails. As tombstones are effaced by the passing of time, so also is the recollection of those who once lived: “As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more” (Ps. 103:15-16).

Modern man lacks love. Instead of seeking the highest good of another, he callously casts aside those who would complicate his life. Abortion terminates the unexpected and

unplanned child; euthanasia solves the problem of the aged but unwanted parent. Being filled with malice for God and one’s fellowman, degenerate humanity is lacking even in natural affection (Rom. 1:28-31; Tit. 3:3).

Contemporary culture, with its emphasis on materialism and mysticism, manifests a radically different approach to death and funerals. In today’s pleasure-oriented society, with its focus fixated on the present, funeral services are little more than a celebration of life, with the accompanying expectation that the party will continue into eternity. Multiculturalism, with its celebration of diversity, has reintroduced a multitude of non-Christian religious influences: Eastern religions, native superstitions, shamanism, animism, paganism, etc.

Several years ago, I attended a memorial service for a woman who tragically died at an early age. The gathering was not a funeral in the traditional sense. No sermon was presented; no Scripture cited; no sober admonitions offered. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs were wholly absent. Instead, the assembled mourners were subjected to a classic rock anthology, including the complete (8 minutes and 2 seconds) recorded rendition of “Stairway to Heaven” as performed by the 1970s English rock group Led

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Zeppelin. The deceased was remembered as one who had lived and loved, who enjoyed friends and family, communing with nature, etc. Only the vaguest of spiritualities were expressed: “Assuredly, she is now walking the celestial beaches, playing with the celestial dolphins, enjoying life forevermore.”

In Buddhism, death marks the transition from this life to the next for the deceased, the moment when one begins a new mode of existence within the context of a never-ending cycle of rebirths. For the living, death is a reminder of Buddha’s teaching on impermanence; it also provides survivors an opportunity to assist the one who has passed on as he/she journeys on to a new existence.

Among the environmentally-conscious, “Green funerals” are becoming more popular. Concerned about the effect that traditional burial or cremation may have upon the environment, some choose to be buried in a coffin made of cardboard or other easily-biodegradable materials. Instead of being laid to rest in a cemetery, they may choose internment in a park or woodlands. Some even have a tree planted over their grave as a contribution to the environment and a means of natural remembrance. Certainly, good stewardship is commended, and we rightfully rejoice in the beauty of God’s handiwork. Furthermore, respect for the dead is not defined by the cost of a funeral. However, in the secular religion of radical environmentalism, Gaia—the supposed mother goddess of the earth—has a greater claim upon man than does Jehovah—the Creator and Sustainer of life.

How does all this compare to the Word of God? In contrast with the carnality of modern culture, including its corruption of funeral observances, Holy Scripture compels us to honestly confront reality, engage in proper remembrance, respect, and reflection, along with appropriate expressions of personal resolve.

Reality

God created man as a creature of choice, imposing physical death as the penalty of transgression (Gen. 2:15-17). After the fall, God said to Adam, “By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:17-19). When driven from the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24), Adam began the inexorable march to

the grave (Gen. 5:1-5). In like manner, death spread to all men, because all have sinned (Rom. 5:12-14). Even those blessed with length of days must eventually confront the certainty of death (Ps. 90:1-12).

Jesus affirms the reality of the resurrection, both for the righteous and the wicked (John 5:25-29). This doctrinal truth is foundational to the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-5). If there is no resurrection, faith becomes futile, and discipleship is folly (1 Cor. 15:12-19). Nevertheless, the inspired apostle affirms the certainty of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-26, 50-58).

The reality of recompense should constrain the conduct of all, both young and old (Eccl. 11:9-12:8, 13-14). Urging a path of self-denial and service, Jesus affirmed that every man will be repaid according to his deeds (Matt. 16:24-27). The apostolic message is likewise consistent (Acts 10:42; 17:30-31; Rom. 2:4-11; 2 Cor. 5:10-11).

Remembrance

A funeral is a time for remembrance. David chanted a lamentation over Saul and Jonathan: “Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How have the mighty fallen!” (2 Sam. 1:17-27). In like manner, Jeremiah chanted a lament for Josiah (2 Chron. 35:20-27, esp. v. 25). Funerals are also an appropriate time for remembering God’s ways (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 4:17), his words (Neh. 1:8-9; 2 Pet. 3:1-2), and his deeds (Pss. 77:11-15; 105:1-7).

Respect

A funeral is a time for respect. As children honor their parents (Exod. 20:12), and those who are younger honor the aged (Lev. 19:32), so the living should honor the dead. Though his actions were misinterpreted, David honored Nahash, king of the Ammonites, upon his death (2 Sam. 10:1-5). In like manner, and to a decidedly greater degree, we should respect God, the Judge of the living and the dead (Lev. 10:1-3; Mal. 1:6-14; 1 Pet. 1:17-19).

Reflection

A funeral is a time for reflection: “It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, because that is the end of every man, and the living takes it to heart.” Again, “The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning, while the mind of fools is in the house of

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pleasure” (Eccl. 7:1-6). Focusing upon carnal pleasure, sinners do not consider the Word of God, nor heed the warnings contained therein (Isa. 5:8-12; 22:12-14). Persistent rebellion carries serious and eternal consequences: “Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” (Ps. 2:10-12).

Resolve

A funeral is a time for resolve. Tenacity is necessary for courageous living: “Among the divisions of Reuben there were great resolves of heart” (Judg. 5:12-15); it is an essential ingredient of spiritual fidelity: only with resolute heart will we remain true to the Lord (Acts 11:19-24).

When forced to face our own mortality, the words of that old gospel song should resonate in our hearts: *“I am resolved no longer to linger, charmed by the world’s delight, things that are higher, things that are nobler, these have allured my sight. I am resolved to go to the Savior, leaving my sin and strife; He is the true One, He is the just One, He hath the words of life.*

I am resolved to follow the Savior, faithful and true each day; Heed what He sayeth, do what He willeth, He is the living Way. I am resolved to enter the kingdom, leaving the paths of sin; friends may oppose me, foes may beset me, still will I enter in. I am resolved, and who will go with me? Come, friends, without delay, taught by the Bible, led by the Spirit, we’ll walk the heav’nly way. Refrain: I will hasten to Him, hasten so glad and free; Jesus, greatest, highest, I will come to Thee. I will hasten, hasten to Him, hasten so glad and free; Jesus, Jesus, greatest, highest, I will come to Thee.”

Conclusion

Death is a sad but inescapable reality: It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this comes the judgment (Heb. 9:27). Heeding the word of the Lord as spoken through Haggai, let us consider our ways, and—if necessary—reorder our priorities (Hag. 1:1-15). Let us live so that the blessing of Balaam can rightfully and equally apply to us: “Let me die the death of the upright, and let my end be like his!” (Num. 23:7-10).

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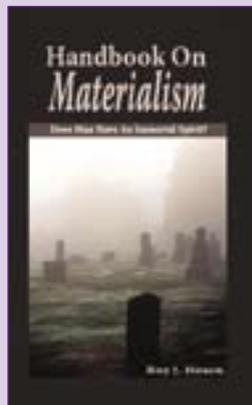


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The Clash of Cultures

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee*, the following about the Port Huron gathering:

“The Final session (drafting the Statement) lasted all night and then the delegates walked down to Lake Huron, some held hands as they watched the sun rise. It felt like the dawn of a new age,” one of them said, “It was exalting....We thought we knew what had to be done, and that we were going to do it.”

The relentless message of the Port Huron Statement was that America was corrupt from top to bottom. Grave and critical faults that required sweeping changes were found with American foreign policy, corporations, labor unions, old-style liberalism, universities, race relations, economic arrangements, military preparations, government, political parties, the desire for material goods, and much more. People with such a view of their society could not respect its institutions, its leaders, its moral tone, or accept a process of gradual reform (Bork, *Slouching Toward Gomorrah*, 30-31).

An orchestra of voices—from *Ramparts Magazine*, Timothy Leary, the Beatles, and Peter and Jane Fonda to Ravi Shankar and the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi—goaded us to recognize the legitimate, even preferable, alternatives to the American value system. We were encouraged by Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Steppenwolf, Jefferson Airplane, Canned Heat, Iron Butterfly, Cream, Deep Purple, Frank Zappa, and a host of groups to materialize our frustration by turning on and dropping out. We grew to hate war, the draft board, the establishment, the government, our parents, their religion and their country. We tried to return to nature with communes and trips to the backwoods and Colorado. Nudity, ‘free love’, long hair, incense, water pipes, hashish, acid, grass, speed, Roman sandals, headbands, beads, peace symbols, roach clips, ‘granny’ glasses, panel trucks, sitars, concerts and light shows were some of the facets of our lifestyle which helped to numb our awareness of reality (Dave Miller, *Piloting the Straight*, 17-18).

Those winds of change are still blowing. Since 1992 the White House has been occupied by children of the sixties along with seats of Congress and judges from the local level to the Supreme Court. I do not say that all in these positions have bought into the moral decadence which was spawned in those hectic years, but many have. The world in which we live is far different from that in which this writer grew up. All changes are not bad. Many young people today look at you with disbelief when you tell them that divorce was rare fifty to sixty years ago. While premarital sex certainly occurred, it was not the norm and public schools did not teach you how to use a condom, or

give you a number to call for an abortion, or provide day care for teenage mothers out of wedlock. Young people are surprised when you tell them that on earlier television sit-coms, married couples were portrayed in separate beds, even those who were actually married to each other. Sodomy was not only frowned on, it was illegal. We had no AIDS epidemic fifty years ago. When I was in high school, I knew that a few boys drank but I knew of none that used illegal drugs. Our mothers and grandmothers would have fainted to have to sit through a commercial for condoms, feminine hygiene products, or sexual enhancement drugs.

The Church and Culture

If you think the church of our Lord has escaped this cultural clash, then you must have been asleep. The spirit of the world has captured the hearts of all too many Christians. It has skewed our sense of priorities. Immodest dress is a problem nearly everywhere. Social drinking is accepted and even defended in some pulpits and Bible classes. The entertainment which is accepted by many is often questionable. Many have bought into the false philosophies about training and disciplining children. Our children have been brainwashed with the false religion having to do with ecology and the environment. They become worshipers of “mother earth” and do not understand the basic truth that the earth, including animals, were created by God for our use. They have bought into the notion that they can save the planet. Man did not create the planet and he cannot destroy it. Certainly we ought to be good stewards of it. Some of the young people who are so eager to save the planet, would do well to start in their own bedroom—hang up their clothes, vacuum the floor, help keep the kitchen clean as well as the bathroom. If you want to clean up the planet, stop worrying about someone’s SUV and start in your own room!

Obsession with sports has blurred the understanding of what is important. Some brethren have become estranged from others of “like precious faith” over preference for ball teams. Worship periods and gospel meetings must take a backseat to ball games. Scouting, little league baseball, basketball, and football are given preference over Bible study and gospel meetings. This is all part of what happens when two worlds collide.

Brethren, keep in mind that this world is not our home. “Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look

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The Clash of Cultures

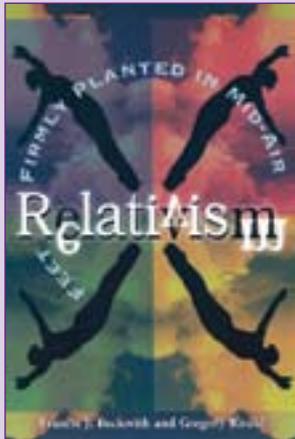
for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:20). But our eternal destiny depends on how we live and whom we serve while we are in this present world. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 67)

might redeem unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:11-14).

It is our hope that this special issue will provide edification, strength, perspective, hope, and ammunition to help us stand our ground when two worlds collide.

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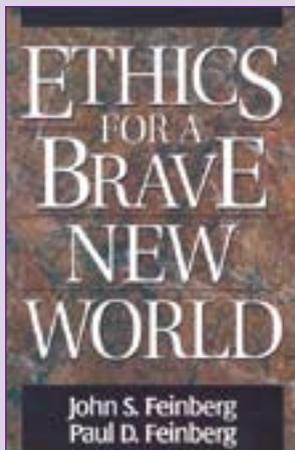


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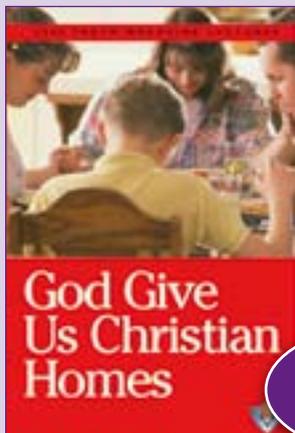


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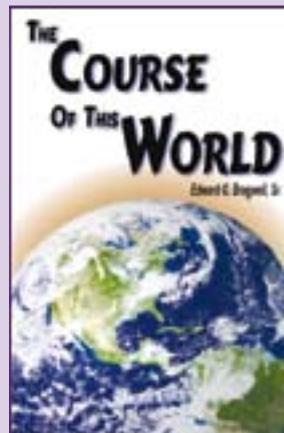


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<p>BIRMINGHAM, AL Pine Lane Church of Christ 3955 Pine Lane • Bessemer, AL (N. side of Exit #6 at I459) Bible Study 9:15 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Terry W. Benton (205) 425-2352 or 978-8342</p>	<p>Shop online at truthbooks.net</p>	<p>OWENS CROSS ROADS, AL Church of Christ at Elon In Elon Community 4021 Hobbs Island Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Charles Maples 256-539-0772</p>	<p>TUCSON, AZ Tucson Church of Christ 2020 N Forbes Blvd., Suite 107 Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. 520-622-8986 www.tucsonchurchofchrist.com</p>	<p>HARRISON, AR Capps Rd. Church of Christ 407 Bella Vista Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Norman E. Sewell 741-9104 or 741-5151</p>	<p>TEXARKANA, AR Church of Christ 2301 Franklin Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Marc R. Hinds</p>
<p>BIRMINGHAM, AL Pinson Church of Christ 4323 Glen Brook Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Ken Chapman (205) 681-6231 or 680-5770</p>		<p>HUNTSVILLE, AL Weatherly Heights Church of Christ 930 Weatherly Rd. SE Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (256) 881-9535 www.weatherlychurch.com</p>	<p>PARRISH, AL McArthur Heights Church of Christ 5082 Hwy. 269 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. (205) 686-5978 or 686-5620</p>	<p>YUMA, AZ Valley Church of Christ 2375 W. 8th St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Bob Lovelace (928) 539-7089 www.yumavalleychurchofchrist.com</p>	<p>JACKSONVILLE, AR Church of Christ 1807 McArthur Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Dennis Adams (501) 982-6413, 982-6776 or 985-5159</p>
<p>BIRMINGHAM, AL Vestavia Hills Church of Christ 2325 Old Columbiana Rd. (near I-65 & Hwy. 31) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Harold Comer and Jason Cicero (205) 822-0018 or 822-0082</p>	<p>MADISON, AL Hughes Road at Gooch Lane Church of Christ 1550 Hughes Rd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Frank Walton (256) 830-1654 www.teachingtruth.org</p>	<p>RED BAY, AL Eastside Church of Christ Meadow Dr. & Hwy. 24 East Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Danny Fuller (256) 356-2723, 356-4513, 627-1763 or (662) 728-8088</p>	<p>BATESVILLE, AR Church of Christ Quail Valley 4104 E. Harrison St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Leonard Westbrook (870) 612-8409 or 698-0542 and Alan Jones (870) 793-0954</p>	<p>LITTLE ROCK, AR Church of Christ 7115 West 65th St. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Don McClain Res. (501)847-6677 Study (501) 568-1062</p>	<p>ALAMEDA, CA Alameda Church of Christ 2167 Santa Clara Ave. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Olen Holderby (510) 523-0547 www.alamedacoc.org</p>
<p>BRUNSDIDGE, AL Church of Christ 437 Clayton St (at US 231) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Paul Carter (334) 397-4684 Billy Carter: (334) 566-3205 pcarter@graceba.net billyc@troycable.net</p>	<p>MOBILE, AL West Mobile Church of Christ 129 Hillcrest Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (251) 342-4144 or 342-2041</p>	<p>SCOTTSBORO, AL Eastside Church of Christ John T. Reid Pkwy. (Hwy. 72, 2 mi. E. of Hwy. 35) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Wayne Chappell, Sr. (256) 574-1603 or 575-2664</p>	<p>CLINTON, AR Mt. Zion Church of Christ 1202 Hwy. 16 West Clinton, AR 72031 (1.2 miles W of US 65) Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Bill Dodd Bldg: (501) 745-2572</p>	<p>MARSHALL, AR Marshall Church of Christ (North Central, AR) Hwy. 27 N, 1 Mi. from 65 Jct. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Randy Seairight (870) 448-2055</p>	<p>BELLFLOWER, CA Rose Ave. Church of Christ 17903 Ibbetson Ave. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (562) 866-5615</p>
<p>HELP VACATIONING CHRISTIANS FIND YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP</p>	<p>MONTGOMERY, AL Church of Christ 800 Perry Hill Rd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jeff Henderson 244-1675, 277-9155, 271-4679</p>	<p>FAIRBANKS, AK Chena Small Tracts Road Church of Christ 5033 Chena Small Tracts Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (907) 479-8918</p>	<p>CONWAY, AR Hwy. 65 Church of Christ 217 Highway 65 Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Bruce Reeves Bldg: (501) 336-0052</p>	<p>PINE BLUFF, AR Church of Christ 4700 W. 28th St. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:35 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Clarence W. Fell (870) 879-2097</p>	<p>CANOGA PARK, CA (San Fernando Valley) Church of Christ 7054 Winnetka Ave. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Afternoon 2:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Minister: Bruce Evans (818)348-2193 Spanish congregation (818)701-0112</p>
<p>FLORENCE, AL College View Church of Christ 851 N. Pine St. (Next to University Campus) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelists: Mark White</p>	<p>MONTGOMERY, AL Eastbrook Church of Christ 650 Coliseum Blvd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:00 P.M. Bldg: (334) 272-4232 Evangelist: Brian Moore 279-1077 Carroll Puckett 288-1461; Charles Martin 283-2983; Bob Smith 334-277-1904</p>	<p>GLENDALE, AZ Church of Christ 6801 N. 60th Ave. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:40 A.M. Bible Study 5:00 P.M. Evening 5:40 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Steven Harper</p>	<p>CONWAY, AR Prince Street Church of Christ 2655 Prince St. (Hwy. 60) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (501) 336-0669</p>	<p>ROGERS, AR Central Church of Christ P.O. Box 763 Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Ricky Manes (479) 636-7484 (479) 631-0288</p>	<p>DUBLIN, CA Tri-Valley Church of Christ 11873 Dublin Blvd. Dublin, CA 94568 Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Joshua Higgins (925) 828-8747</p>
<p>HUNTSVILLE, AL Chapman Acres Church of Christ 2137 Penhall Dr., NE (I-565, Exit 21, left on Maysville Rd., left on Chapman Ave., right on Penhall Dr.) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Roger Blackwelder (256) 536-5296 or 776-2223</p>	<p>NORTHPORT, AL Northwood Church of Christ 4601 Northwood Estates Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: David Hartselle</p>	<p>TUCSON, AZ Church of Christ 145 N. Country Club Rd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Hugh Delong 326-3634 or 722-3179</p>	<p>FT. SMITH, AR South 46th St. Church of Christ 2323 South 46th St. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: John Hagenbuch (479) 478-6108 or 782-0588</p>	<p>To make changes to your ad, contact us at andyalex@bellsouth.net</p>	<p>FOLSOM, CA Church of Christ 900 E. Natomas St. P.O. Box 492 Worship 9:30 A.M. Bible Study 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: David Posey (530) 676-9514 or (916) 608-4866 www.folsomchurch.com</p>

<p>FREMONT, CA Church of Christ in the Centerville area 38069 Martha Ave. Ste 100 Fremont, CA 94536 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. (510) 794-7659</p>	<p>IGNACIO, CO Church of Christ 295 Burns Ave. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Bible Study 1:00 P.M. (970) 563-9418</p>	<p>DESTIN, FL South Walton Church of Christ 64 Casting Lake Rd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (850) 622-3817 www.southwaltonchurchofchrist.com</p>	<p>KEY LARGO, FL Key Largo Church of Christ 100695 N. Overseas Hwy. 33037 m.m. 100.5 on U.S. 1 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Roland Fritz (305) 451-1194</p>	<p>ORLANDO, FL Azalea Park Church of Christ 6800 Lake Underhill Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: James P. Needham (407) 277-7931 or 628-2995</p>	<p>SEFFNER, FL Church of Christ 621 E. Wheeler Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Bobby Witherington (813) 684-1297 www.seffnercofc.org</p>	
<p>HEMET, CA Church of Christ 203 W. Acacia Ave. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Alan Piner (951)925-1991</p>	<p>MONTROSE, CO San Juan church of Christ 1414 Hawk Parkway, Unit C Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. Evangelist: Richard Thetford (970) 626-5558 or (970) 249-8116 www.sanjuanchurchofchrist.org</p>	<p>FORT LAUDERDALE, FL Northside Church of Christ 912 NW 19th St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (305) 763-1404</p>	<p>KISSIMMEE, FL Church of Christ 2431 Fortune Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Mark Copeland (407) 931-1725 or 348-0300</p>	<p>ORLANDO, FL S. Bumby Church of Christ 3940 S. Bumby Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelists: Joshua C. Creel (407) 851-8031 or (321) 235-3307</p>	<p>TAMPA, FL Central Church of Christ 2701 E. Fowler Ave (in the Clarion) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. John Lockaby (813) 833-5786 John Trimble (813) 914-0546 Tom O'Neal (813) 625-5651</p>	
<p>LONG BEACH, CA Church of Christ 3433 Studebaker Rd. Bible Study 9:50 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Lonnie Fritz (562) 420-2363 Mark Reeves (562) 420-9577</p>	<p>PAGOSA SPRINGS, CO Church of Christ Community Center 451 Hot Springs Blvd. Worship 9:00 A.M. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Eddie Campbell (970) 264-4236</p>	<p>FORT MYERS, FL Church of Christ 200 Pine Island Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Vernon E. Ford (239) 567-0819</p>	<p>LAKELAND, FL Lakeland Hills Blvd. Church of Christ 2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelists: Marc W. Gibson Don Hastings (863) 688-4336</p>	<p>PALATKA, FL Palatka Church of Christ 505 Third Ave. (Third Ave. intersects Hwy. 19 one block south of Hwy. 20) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Robert Skomp (386) 326-3952 or 546-5689</p>	<p>ZEPHYRHILLS, FL Church of Christ 5444 4th St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Assembly 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (813) 788-9587</p>	
<p>OCEANSIDE-VISTA, CA Church of Christ 2020 Sunset Dr. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Lowell C. Bell (760) 940-8003</p>	<p>DOVER, DE Kent-Sussex Church of Christ 2041 South DuPont Hwy Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (302) 672-7087 www.delawarebiblestudies.com</p>	<p>FORT MYERS, FL Southside Church of Christ 13641 Learning Ct. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: David P. Schmidt 433-2838 or 482-2158</p>	<p>MERRITT ISLAND, FL Church of Christ 512 Plumosa St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (321) 453-3320</p>	<p>PANAMA CITY BEACH, FL Beach Church of Christ 8910 Front Beach Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Ben Liggins (850) 234-2521 or 234-1368</p>	<p>CENTERVILLE, GA Centerville Church of Christ 250 Collins Ave. (Near Robins AFB) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: J. Wiley Adams (478) 922-1128</p>	
<p>ARVADA, CO (Denver) Northgate Church of Christ (Lincoln Academy Charter School) 6980 Pierce Street Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Afternoon Class/ Worship 1:30 P.M. (303) 456-4895</p>	<p>ALACHUA, FL Santa Fe Hills Church of Christ Hwy. 441, 1/2 mile west of I-75 (Exit 78) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: James L. Yopp (386) 462-4325 or (352) 333-7003 www.geocities.com/jameslyopp</p>	<p>FT. WALTON BEACH, FL 6 Lane Dr. Mary Esther, FL Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Joey Rankin (850) 244-9222</p>	<p>MIAMI, FL Flagler Grove Church of Christ (Nearest to Airport) 500 N.W. 53rd Ave. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: John Buttrick (305) 634-5924</p>	<p>PANAMA CITY, FL Church of Christ 3339 Florida Ave. (Between Baldwin Rd. & Hwy. 390) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Marvin Hudson (850) 265-6539</p>	<p>CONYERS, GA Rockdale Church of Christ East Metro Atlanta, 705 Smyrna Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Forrest Bacon, elder (770) 918-1932; Wendell Holland, elder (770) 761-6987; Bob Tuten, elder (678) 475-7212; Building (770) 929-3973</p>	
<p>AURORA, CO (Denver) Boston St. Church of Christ 1297 Boston St. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Preacher: Sam Csonka (303) 366-5283</p>	<p>BRONSON, FL Church of Christ 894 E. Hathaway (Hwy. 27A) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Thursday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: John Zellner (352) 528-3058</p>	<p>FROSTPROOF, FL Church of Christ 40 W. "A" St. Frostproof, FL 33483 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Mike Freese (863) 635-2607 or 635-4278</p>	<p>MIAMI, FL Church of Christ 12780 Quail Roost Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Clark Pace (305) 233-9590 or (954) 430-1437</p>	<p>PENSACOLA, FL East Hill Church of Christ 2078 E. Nine Mile Rd. at Camberwell Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Stan Adams 479-2130 or 994-7749</p>	<p>PINE MTN. VALLEY, GA Church of Christ Route 116 (near Callaway Gardens) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Tommy W. Thomas (706) 628-5117 or 628-5229</p>	
<p>COLORADO SPRINGS, CO Northeast Church of Christ 6660 Galley Rd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (719) 597-6661</p>	<p>BROOKSVILLE, FL Church of Christ 604 W. Fort Dade Ave. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: V.C. McCormick (352) 796-9803</p>	<p>GENEVA, FL Geneva Church of Christ Ave. C and 2nd St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. (407) 349-9998</p>	<p>To make changes to your ad, contact us at andyalex@bellsouth.net</p>		<p>PENSACOLA, FL Northside Church of Christ 4001 N. Ninth Ave. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Joseph R. Mazter (850) 432-0736</p>	<p>VALDOSTA, GA Church of Christ 4313 North Valdosta Rd. (Located 1 mile E. of Exit 22 off I-75) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (229) 244-8630</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Subscribe Today! Truth Magazine 1-800-428-0121</p>	<p>CHIPLEY, FL Church of Christ 1295 Brickyard Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (850) 638-4942</p>	<p>HOLLYWOOD, FL Harding St. Church of Christ 5828 Harding St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Jason Schoenholz (954) 961-4112</p>	<p>OCALA, FL Church of Christ 3900 S. Pine (441, 301 & 27 S.) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Steve Hudgins (352) 694-2922 Evangelist: Jeremy Ferguson</p>	<p>ST. PETERSBURG, FL Church of Christ 901 49th St. South Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Doug Barlar (813) 321-2721</p>	<p>BLACKFOOT, ID Church of Christ 370 N. Shilling P.O. Box 158-83221 Bible Study 1:30 P.M. Worship 2:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (208) 785-6168 or 681-1552</p>	
<p>GRAND JUNCTION, CO Valley Church of Christ 491 Sparn Road P.O. Box 40531 Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Bill Bohannon (970) 245-5112</p>	<p>DELAND, FL North Blvd. Church of Christ 823 N. Woodland Blvd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jack Owen (386) 734-6907 or 734-4311</p>	<p>JACKSONVILLE, FL Marietta Church of Christ 8150 Driggers St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Jamie Rhoden (904) 781-5704 or 693-9929 693-0432 www.mariettacoc.com</p>	<p>ORLANDO, FL Pine Hills Church of Christ 890 Hastings St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Ray West (407) 293-2851 or 290-8650</p>	<p>PLANT CITY, FL Plant City Church of Christ 315 N. Wilder Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Gary M. Ogden (813) 752-2227 or 752-2771</p>	<p>ABINGDON, IL Abingdon Church of Christ 209 N. Main Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 4:00 P.M. Evangelist: John B. Wilson (309) 462-5368</p>	

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MARYLAND

<p>BENTON, IL Church of Christ 203 N. Central St. P.O. Box 12 (west of Wal-Mart)</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Greg King (618) 438-2911 or 435-2981</p>	<p>ELLETTSVILLE, IN Church of Christ 303 W. Temperance St.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Johnie Edwards Evangelist: John Isaac Edwards (812) 876-2285 or 336-4630</p>	<p>LOOLITIC, IN Church of Christ 400 Lafayette Ave. P.O. Box 34</p> <p>Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (812) 279-4332</p>	<p>LENEXA, KS Lenexa Church of Christ 7845 Cottonwood</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jim Stauffer (913) 631-6519 or 764-9170</p>	<p>DANVILLE, KY 385 E. Lexington Ave.</p> <p>Worship 10:00 A.M. Bible Study 11:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelists: Steve Wolfgang & Scott Vifuqain 236-4204, 236-8506 or 238-0860</p>	<p>BATON ROUGE, LA Park Forest Church of Christ 9923 Sunny Cline Dr.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Bill Crews 275-4684 or 273-1105</p>	
<p>CHICAGO, IL Northside Church of Christ 2543 W. Division St.</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: James R. Davis, Jr. (312) 961-2150</p>	<p>HAMMOND, IN Woodmar Church of Christ 2133 169th St.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (219) 845-8942</p>	<p>PEKIN, IN Church of Christ (First St. & Karnes Ct.)</p> <p>Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: John Henry 967-3437 or 967-3520</p>	<p>TOPEKA, KS 17th Street Church of Christ 5600 SW 17th St.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (785) 235-8687 or 273-7977 www.17thstreetchurchofchrist.org</p>	<p>FRANKLIN, KY 31-W North Church of Christ 1733 Bowling Green Road</p> <p>Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Steve Monts (270) 586-3978 www.franklinchurch.com</p>	<p>BOSSIER CITY, LA Bossier Church of Christ 2917 Foster</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (318) 747-4308 or 742-4557</p>	
<p>CHICAGO, IL Church of Christ 1514 West 74th Street</p> <p>Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: James E. Scott Bldg. (773) 224-9279 (708) 339-6126</p>	<p>HOBART, IN Church of Christ 300 N. Liberty St.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Keith Welch (219) 942-2663</p>	<p>RICHMOND, IN Gaar Road Church of Christ 1835 Gaar Rd. (1 mi. S. of I-70 off Hwy. 227)</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Douglas R. Clark (765) 935-2911</p>	<p>WICHITA, KS Ridge Road Church of Christ 7001 W. 21st St., North</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. (316) 722-6622 or 744-1841</p>	<p>GLASGOW, KY East Main St. Church of Christ 106 Carnation Dr. (across from Gorin Park)</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. Evangelist: Doug Lancaster (270) 678-2847 or 651-7141</p>	<p>LAKE CHARLES, LA Southside Church of Christ 3919 Auburn St.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (337) 474-9122 or 436-0477</p>	
<p>DOWNERS GROVE, IL Church of Christ 1236 63rd St. (1 and 1/2 mile E. of I355)</p> <p>Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:55 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (630) 968-0760 • www.dgcoc.org</p>	<p>INDIANAPOLIS, IN Castleton Church of Christ 7701 East 86th St., 46256</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (317) 842-3613 Eric Spencer (317) 750-5939</p>	<p>SALEM, IN Westside Church of Christ 2000 West State Rd. 56</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Evan Casey (812) 883-2033 www.westsidechurchofchrist.info</p>	<p>WICHITA, KS Westside Church of Christ 3500 S. Meridian</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Mike O'Neal (316) 729-9302 or 942-1649 www.cocwestside.com</p>	<p>LEITCHFIELD, KY Mill St. Church of Christ Highway 62 E.</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:55 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Joey Cooper (270) 259-4968</p>	<p>LEESVILLE, LA White Park Church of Christ 17801 Nolan Trace; 20 mi. from Fort Polk (5 mi. W. of Leesville)</p> <p>Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:35 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (337) 239-4614 www.whiteparkchurchofchrist.org</p>	
<p>GLEN ELYN, IL Church of Christ 796 Prairie, 60137</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Joseph T. Novak (630) 529-2149 (630) 858-2290</p>	<p>JAMESTOWN, IN Church of Christ (1 Mi. south of I-74) Cor. Darlington & Mill Sts.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:25 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Denver Niemeier (765) 676-6404 or (317) 892-6285</p>	<p>TRAFALGAR, IN Spearsville Rd. Church of Christ, 6244 S. 500W. (1.2 mi. S. of Hwy. 135)</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: David R. Dodd (317) 878-5969 or (317) 439-3252 spearsvilleroadmessenger@gmail.com</p>	<p>BEAVER DAM, KY Church of Christ 1235 Williams St.</p> <p>Worship 10:00 A.M. Bible Study After Worship Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Mike Thomas (270) 274-4451 or 274-4486</p>	<p>LOUISVILLE, KY Valley Station Church of Christ 1803 Dixie Garden Dr.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Dudley Ross Spears (502) 937-2822</p>	<p>MANY, LA Lakeside Church of Christ 12095 Texas Hwy. (Hwy. 6 W.) 12 miles west of Many</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (318) 256-9396</p>	
<p>MATTOON, IL Southside Church of Christ 1100 S. 17th St.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (217) 234-3702</p>	<p>KOKOMO, IN Church of Christ 1217 S. Courtland Ave.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 10:30 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Joshua Welch (765) 453-2356</p>	<p>DES MOINES, IA Church of Christ 1310 N.E. 54th Ave.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:40 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. 262-6799</p>	<p>BOWLING GREEN, KY West End Church of Christ 820 Old Morgantown Rd., 42101</p> <p>Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelists: Todd Chandler & Lowell Sallee (270) 842-7880 www.westendchurch.com</p>	<p>LOUISVILLE, KY Church of Christ 4401 West Broad St.</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Donald Wright, Jr. (502) 772-3026 or 491-9372</p>	<p>STONEWALL, LA N. DeSoto Church of Christ 2071 Highway 171 (South of Shreveport)</p> <p>Worship 9:00 A.M. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Steve Bobbitt (318) 925-2733</p>	
<p>PALATINE, IL Church of Christ (N.W. Chicago Suburb) 1050 N. Deer Ave.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (847) 967-9667</p>	<p>MARION, IN South Marion Church of Christ 3629 S. Washington St.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (765) 998-7134 or (765) 384-7540</p>	<p>Subscribe Today! Truth Magazine 1-800-428-0121</p>		<p>BRANDENBURG, KY Brandenburg Church of Christ 612 Broadway</p> <p>Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. Evangelist: Charles J. White (270) 422-3878</p>	<p>OWENSBORO, KY Southside Church of Christ 2920 New Hartford Rd.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jarrod Jacobs (270) 683-5386 or 264-7869</p>	<p>WEBSTER, MA Church of Christ Webster 168 Main St.</p> <p>Sunday Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Sunday Worship 10:30 A.M. Wed Bible Study Call for details (508) 765-6067 Preacher: Peter Capocchia</p>
<p>BLOOMINGTON, IN Church of Christ 825 West 2nd St.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. 332-0501</p>	<p>MUNCIE, IN Church of Christ 301 N. Calvert Ave.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Kevin Sulc (765) 284-5299 or 286-5488</p>	<p>GRINNELL, IA Church of Christ 1402 Third Ave.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Brian Chapman (641) 236-1955 or 793-2989</p>	<p>CAMPBELLSVILLE, KY Sunny Hill Dr. Church of Christ (near the Dairy Queen)</p> <p>Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (270) 789-1651</p>	<p>To make changes to your ad, contact us at andyalex@bellsouth.net</p>		<p>PORTLAND, ME Church of Christ 856 Brighton Ave. (Breakwater School) Leave Maine Turnpike at Exit 48</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Second service immediately following morning worship. Mid-week Bible Study—Please call for times & places (207) 839-3075 or 839-8409</p>
<p>CLARKSVILLE, IN Clarksville Church of Christ 407 Lewis and Clark Pk.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Kipp Campbell (812) 941-0747 or 944-2305 KCcampbell@earthlink.net Elders: 944-1878 or 948-9917</p>	<p>NOBLESVILLE, IN Noblesville Church of Christ 15321 Herriman Blvd.</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: John Hughbanks (317) 770-0798 or 332-0513 www.noblesvillechurchofchrist.com</p>	<p>EL DORADO, KS Emporia St. Church of Christ 1154 S. Emporia</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (316) 321-1025</p>	<p>CANEYVILLE, KY Caneyville Church of Christ 103 N. Main St. (near the 4 way stop)</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Dale Barnes (270) 879-6152 or 274-3065</p>	<p>REGINA, KY Road Creek Church of Christ 7 miles west of Elkhorn City on Route 460 & Route 80</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (606) 754-9883, 754-8642 or 754-5398</p>	<p>ARBUTUS, MD Arbutus Church of Christ 5205 East Dr., Suite D (East Drive Shopping Center)</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Church phone: (410) 247-1396, 590-2852 or 551-8274</p>	

<p>To make changes to your ad, contact us at andyalex@bellsouth.net</p>	<p>CLINTON, MS McRaven Rd. Church of Christ 301 McRaven Rd. (I20, exit 36) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:55 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Leonard White (601) 925-9757 or 924-2645</p>	<p>DONIPHAN, MO Southside Church of Christ Hwy. 142 E. 1/2 mile (P.O. Box 220) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (573) 996-3251 or 996-3513</p>	<p>ST. JAMES, MO Church of Christ 685 Sidney St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Lynn Huggins (573) 265-8628</p>	<p>ALAMOGORDO, NM 25th & Hawaii Church of Christ P.O. Box 2065 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. (505) 434-5834</p>	<p>HOPE MILLS, NC Gray's Creek Church of Christ 1391 Sand Hill Road Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. 910-423-8719 910-424-2372</p>
<p>SEVERN, MD Southwest Church of Christ 805 Meadow Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Brandon Trout (410) 969-1420 or (410) 551-6549 www.swcolchrist.com</p>	<p>COLUMBUS, MS Woodlawn Church of Christ 359 Sanders Mills Rd. Steen Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:45 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Willis Logan (601) 356-6629</p>	<p>FAIR GROVE, MO Church of Christ 217 N. Orchard Blvd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Walter Myers (417) 830-8972 or (417) 736-2663</p>	<p>ST. JOSEPH, MO County Line Church of Christ 2727 County Line Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 4:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (816) 279-4737 www.countylinechurchofchrist.com</p>	<p>ALBUQUERQUE, NM Albuquerque Church of Christ 1908 Sunshine Terrace SE Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (call to confirm time) 764-9277</p>	<p>MARION, NC Hwy. 70 Church of Christ 18 Peachtree St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 4:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: T.J. Elliott (828) 652-7504 or 652-2584</p>
<p>RIVERDALE, MD (Washington, D.C. area) Wildercroft Church of Christ 6330 Auburn Ave. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Mike Thomley (301) 474-7460 or 446-1912</p>	<p>GULFPORT, MS Morris Rd. Church of Christ 1 blk. N. of Dedeaux Rd. & 3 Rivers Rd. on Morris Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Don Davis (228) 832-5529</p>	<p>KANSAS CITY, MO Nashua Church of Christ 11425 N. Main St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Mark Broyles (816) 532-4270 or 734-4142</p>	<p>ST. JOSEPH, MO Prairie Hills Church of Christ 14273 County Rd. 307 (.7 mi. E of Intersection I-29 & Hwy. 169) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (816) 233-6485 Evangelist: Erik Smith</p>	<p>ALBUQUERQUE, NM Heights Church of Christ 7801 Zuni Road, S.E. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Darrel Yontz (505) 266-7577 www.heightschurchofchrist.com</p>	<p>BEAVERCREEK, OH Knollwood Church of Christ 1031 Welford Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Keith Greer (937) 426-1422</p>
<p>CEDAR SPRINGS, MI Grand Rapids Area W. Michigan Church of Christ Sr. Citizen Center, 44 Park St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. David Waldron (231) 832-2189 Michael Sewell (616) 361-8795</p>	<p>MERIDIAN, MS Grandview Church of Christ 2820 Grandview Ave. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. Evangelist: Danny Gardner (601) 681-4505 or 482-9543 dg1969@bellsouth.net</p>	<p>KANSAS CITY, MO Vivion Road Church of Christ 2026 N.E. Vivion Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Tom Kinzel (816) 453-6157</p>	<p>BEATRICE, NE Church of Christ 7th and Bell Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. 233-4102 or 228-3827 www.churchofchrist7bell.com</p>	<p>ALBUQUERQUE, NM Sandia Church of Christ 3939 San Pedro N.E., Building D-2 Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Derek Chambers (505) 830-2086 www.sandiachurchofchrist.com</p>	<p>CINCINNATI, OH Blue Ash Church of Christ Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Russell Dunaway, Jr. 891-3174</p>
<p>DULUTH, MN Church of Christ 318 N. 18th Ave. E. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Bible Study 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Nick Krumrei (218) 728-3233</p>	<p>MERIDIAN, MS 7th St. Church of Christ 2914 7th St. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:30 P.M. (601) 483-3101</p>	<p>KENNETT, MO Church of Christ 703 Harrison St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (573) 888-6778</p>	<p>LAS VEGAS, NV Vegas Dr. Church of Christ 3816 Vegas Drive Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 4:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (702) 648-4827</p>	<p>BUFFALO, NY Greater Buffalo Church of Christ 3578 Walden Ave Lancaster, NY 14086 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:15 A.M. Tuesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Daniel Bailey (716) 870-3259</p>	<p>CLEVELAND, OH Lorain Ave. Church of Christ 13501 Lorain Ave. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (216) 476-0660, 651-1689 or (330) 725-3960, 723-0111</p>
<p>Shop online at truthbooks.net</p>	<p>SOUTHAVEN, MS (Memphis area) Church of Christ 2110 E State Line Rd. (Exit I-55) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Landon Hope (662) 342-1132 - Church Building</p>	<p>LILBOURN, MO P.O. Box 270 211 Benton St. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Shane Williams (573) 688-2234 or 748-5204</p>	<p>RENO, NV Central Church of Christ 2450 Wrondel Way, Ste. A Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (775) 786-2888</p>	<p>CARY, NC Walnut St. Church of Christ (Raleigh) 217 Walnut St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Rick Billingsly (919) 467-0012 (919) 372-1497</p>	<p>COLUMBUS, OH Laurel Canyon Church of Christ 409 McNaughton Rd. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (614) 868-1375 www.lccoc.net</p>
<p>ROCHESTER, MN N. Broadway Church of Christ 2002 Second St., SW Bible Study 10:30 A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M. Evening 7:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Luvimino D. Samaniego (501) 289-8906</p>	<p>BLUE SPRINGS, MO Southside Church of Christ 4000 SW Christiansen Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Jim Bailey (816) 228-9262</p>	<p>RAYMORE, MO Raymore Church of Christ 107 N. Woodson St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Bill Johnston (816) 322-0042 or 318-3642</p>	<p>SPARKS, NV Sierra Nevada Church of Christ 2425 Pyramid Way Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Monday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Ross Triplett, Sr. (775) 972-4911 retriplett@triplettweb.com</p>	<p>CHARLOTTE, NC Harris Blvd. Church of Christ 5424 E.W.T. Harris Blvd. Worship 8:30 A.M. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelists: Various members of local congregations Don Moeller (704) 532-9242</p>	<p>DAYTON, OH West Carrollton 28 W. Main Street Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:25 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Michael Grushon (937) 866-5162 or 434-3090 E-mail: www.wc-coc.org</p>
<p>ST. CHARLES, MN Church of Christ 636 Whitewater Ave. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Bible Study 2:45 P.M. Evangelist: Robert Lehnertz (507) 534-2905 or 932-3521</p>	<p>CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO North Cape Church of Christ 121 S. Broadview St. Suite 2 Cape Girardeau, MO 63703 Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jerry Lee Westbrook (573) 334-9673</p>	<p>RAYTOWN, MO Sterling Ave. Church of Christ 5825 Sterling Ave. (Near Sports Complex) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Norman E. Fultz (816) 358-3096 or 792-2040 www.sterlingavechurchofchrist.org</p>	<p>PISCATAWAY, NJ 258 Highland Ave. Bible Study 9:15 A.M. Bible Classes 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Gary P. Eubanks (732) 463-1323</p>	<p>CHARLOTTE, NC Charlotte Church of Christ 5327 S. Tyron St. Worship 9:00 A.M. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Wendell Powell (704) 525-5655 or 522-9971</p>	<p>FRANKLIN, OH Church of Christ 6417 Franklin/Lebanon Rd. State Route 123 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Eston Vandever (937) 746-1249 or (513) 422-2466</p>
<p>BOONEVILLE, MS Oakleigh Dr. Church of Christ 101 Oakleigh Dr. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 4:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Building: (662) 728-1942</p>	<p>COLUMBIA, MO Eastside Church of Christ 5051 Ponderosa Columbia, MO 65201 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. 445-5497 or 636-0224</p>	<p>Subscribe Today! Truth Magazine 1-800-428-0121</p>	<p>VAUXHALL, NJ Church of Christ Milbourn Mall Suite 6 2933 Vauxhall Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Harry A. Persaud (908) 964-8570</p>	<p>DALLAS, NC Deepwood Forest Church of Christ 2002 Lineburger Rd., Hwy. 275 (Between Dallas & Stanley) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Louis Woollums (704) 922-8985</p>	<p>FREMONT, OH Church of Christ 3361 W. State St. 1 mi. W. of Fremont on U.S. Rt. 20 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (419) 849-3340 or 849-3686 www.amplex.net/churchofchrist</p>

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<p>HAMILTON, OH Westview Church of Christ 1040 Azel Ave. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:45 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: David A. Stansberry (513) 868-9988</p>	<p>NORTHWOOD, OH (Toledo Area) Church of Christ 4110 Frey Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Donald Jarabek 893-3566 or 691-0688</p>	<p>PHILADELPHIA, PA Church of Christ 7222 Germantown Ave. Bible Study 10:15 A.M. Worship 11:15 A.M. Tues. night 8:00 P.M. Evangelist: James H. Baker, Jr. (215) 248-2026 www.mtairychurchofchrist.org</p>	<p>COLLIERVILLE, TN East Shelby Church of Christ 4700 Mayfield Rd. West Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Terry Francis (901) 853-7840 or (901) 759-1242</p>	<p>MEMPHIS, TN Rocky Pt. Road Church of Christ 516 E. Rocky Point Rd., Cordova Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Contact: Mitch Stevens (901) 372-5580 or 758-4006</p>	<p>ROCKWOOD, TN Church of Christ Highway 70 East 5080 Roane State Hwy. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Cecil Belcher (865) 717-3654</p>
<p>HILLIARD, OH Church of Christ 4840 Cemetery Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (614) 876-4089</p>	<p>UHRICHVILLE, OH Church of Christ 638 Parrish Street Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Mid-week 6:30 P.M.</p>	<p>To make changes to your ad, contact us at andyalex@bellsouth.net</p>	<p>COLUMBIA, TN Jackson Hts. Church of Christ 1200 Nashville Hwy., Hwy. 31N Bible Study 9:15 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Mid-week 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Andrew Roberts (931) 388-6811</p>	<p>MURFREESBORO, TN Cason Lane Church of Christ 1110 Cason Lane Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (615) 896-0090 (Building) (615) 653-1828 (Wilson Adams) (615) 895-3484 (Phil Cavender) www.casonlanechurch.org</p>	<p>SAVANNAH, TN Savannah Heights Church of Christ 230 Harrison St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jonathan Ellis</p>
<p>MANSFIELD, OH Eastside Church of Christ 326 Grace Street Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:00 P.M. Evangelist: James Bond 526-2868 or 526-4739</p>	<p>WAVERLY, OH 209 Mullins St. Church of Christ Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (740) 947-7122 or 289-3401</p>	<p>BEAUFORT, SC Church of Christ 2107 King St., P.O. Box 4 Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Parris Island, 8:00 A.M., Sunday Evangelist: Ronald Nelson (843) 524-4400 or 524-4652</p>	<p>COLUMBIA, TN Mooreville Pike Church of Christ 417 Mooreville Pike (.8 mi. N. of Hwy. 50/jas. Campbell) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (931) 388-5828; 381-7898; 380-1226 www.moorevillepikecoc.com</p>	<p>MURFREESBORO, TN Compton Rd. Church 663 Compton Rd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Assembly 10:00 A.M. Assembly 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. David Arnold (615) 896-6550 or 896-9474</p>	<p>SHELBYVILLE, TN El Bethel Church of Christ 1801 Hwy. 41-A North Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:50 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Donnie V. Rader (931) 685-1113 or 931-607-9099 dvrader@hughes.net</p>
<p>MANSFIELD, OH Southside Church of Christ 687 Mansfield-Lucas Road Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 6:00 P.M. Building: (419) 522-8982 Leon Bond: 525-3684 Glenn Bond: 522-1965</p>	<p>OKLAHOMA CITY, OK Seminole Pointe Church of Christ 16300 N. May Ave. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: John M. Duvall (405) 340-3189 or 513-6691 www.seminolepointecoc.org</p>	<p>HOPKINS, SC Lower Richland Church of Christ 3000 Trotter Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Wayne Seaton (803) 776-0754</p>	<p>DAYTON, TN Main Street Church of Christ 250 Main St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 2:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Contact: (423) 618-6250 or 332-4604</p>	<p>MURFREESBORO, TN Northfield Blvd. Church of Christ 2091 Pitts Ln. at Northfield Blvd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelists: David Bunting (615) 893-1200</p>	<p>TULLAHOA, TN Church of Christ 1625 W. Lincoln St. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jim Mickells (931) 455-0273 or 563-7312</p>
<p>MARIETTA/RENO, OH Jct. St. Rt. 7 & County Rd. 20 Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (740) 373-0064 (Joe Schof) or 473-9028 (Steve Foutty)</p>	<p>TULSA, OK Woodland Hills Church of Christ 9119 E. 61 St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Ross Oldenkamp (918) 252-1220</p>	<p>NORTH CHARLESTON, SC Ashley Heights Church of Christ 2605 S. Oakridge Cir. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (843) 553-4970 www.findthechurch.com</p>	<p>JACKSON, TN Sunset View Church of Christ 3618 Hwy 70 East (Exit 87 off I-40, 7mi. @ Spring Creek) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Steve Wilkerson (731) 987-2200 or 968-9851</p>	<p>MURFREESBORO, TN South Ridge Church of Christ 488 Barfield-Crescent Rd. PO Box 2257, Zip 37133 (I-24, Exit 81, South 1.5 miles on Hwy 231, turn right) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (615) 494-9686</p>	<p>ABILENE, TX North Park Church of Christ 2958 Grape St. (3 blocks south of I-20) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Wayne Goforth (325) 677-6934 or 672-8026 E-mail: wgoforth@sbcglobal.net</p>
<p>NEW CARLISLE, OH Church of Christ 235 Funston Ave. (Near Wright-Patterson AFB) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Thursday 5:00 P.M. Evangelist: Randy Blackaby (937) 849-1643 or 845-8467 (bdg.)</p>	<p>MEDFORD, OR Church of Christ 1850 Spring St. (Roxy Ann Grange Hall) Corner of Spring/Valley View Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Thursday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Dean Blackwell (541) 773-2649</p>	<p>ORANGEBURG, SC Southside Church of Christ 1502 Binnicker Bridge Rd. (Grange Building - Hwy 70) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evangelist: Fred England (803) 939-0672 www.southside-church.org</p>	<p>JOHNSON CITY, TN Brookmead Church of Christ 2428 Lakeview Drive Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Kevin Kay 423-282-6251 or 426-1836</p>	<p>NASHVILLE, TN Bell Road Church of Christ 1608 Bell Road Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Robert Davenport (615) 833-4444 or 331-7377</p>	<p>Subscribe Today! Truth Magazine 1-800-428-0121</p>
<p>NEW LEBANON, OH Church of Christ 1973 W. Main St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Glen Murphy, Jr. 687-2985</p>	<p>SWEET HOME, OR Church of Christ 3702 E. Long St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Building: (541) 367-1599</p>	<p>SUMTER, SC Woodland Church of Christ 3370 Broad St. Extension Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: A.A. Granke, Jr. (803) 499-6023</p>	<p>KINGSTON SPRINGS, TN Kingston Springs Church of Christ 350 North Main St. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Dan King, Sr. (615) 952-5720 or 662-7626</p>	<p>NASHVILLE, TN Hillview Church of Christ 7471 Charlotte Pike Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jerry Sayre (615) 797-1114</p>	<p>ALLEN, TX West Allen Church of Christ 1414 W. Exchange Blvd. (2 miles w. of Hwy. 75) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Jerry King (214) 504-0443 (972) 727-5355 (bdg)</p>
<p>NEW RICHMOND, OH Church of Christ 550 Washington St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Contact: Dave Wylie (513) 553-6414 www.nrchurchofchrist.com</p>	<p>AVONDALE, PA Avondale Church of Christ 1606 Glen Willow Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (302) 733-7920 or (610) 268-2088 Randy Farme (610) 869-4146</p>	<p>TAYLORS, SC (Greenville Area) Taylors Church of Christ 400 E. Main St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Bill Mosely (864) 268-5224 or 877-2728 www.taylorschurchofchrist.com</p>	<p>KNOXVILLE, TN Chapman Hwy. Church of Christ 7604 Chapman Hwy. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Jack Wise, Jr. (865) 573-6638</p>	<p>NASHVILLE, TN Perry Heights Church of Christ 423 Donelson Pike Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:55 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Johnny Felker (615) 883-3118 http://perryheights.faiweb.com</p>	<p>ALVARADO, TX I-35 Church of Christ (E. Service Rd. of I-35, N. of Alvarado) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (817) 295-7277 or 790-7253</p>
<p>Shop online at truthbooks.net</p>	<p>EXTON, PA Exton Church of Christ 217 N. Whitford Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. 363-8042</p>	<p>WEST COLUMBIA, SC Airport Church of Christ 4013 Edmund Hwy. (Hwy. 302) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Brad McCleary (803) 783-0079 Steven Hutchinson (803) 604-6011</p>	<p>MARYVILLE, TN Smokey Mt. Church of Christ 2206 Montvale Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Harold Tabor (865) 977-4230 Robert Lawson (865) 681-7995</p>	<p>PIGEON FORGE, TN King Branch Road Church of Christ 560 King Branch Road Worship 10:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Facilities available for Sunday evening services upon request. Evangelist: Roger Williams (865) 430-5980 www.KingBranchRoadChurchOf- Christ.org</p>	<p>ALVIN, TX Adoue St. Church of Christ 605 E. Adoue St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Mark Mayberry (281) 331-4953 or (832) 837-9038</p>

<p>ANGELTON, TX Kiber St. Church of Christ P.O. Box 1162 Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Zeke Flores (979) 849-8376</p>	<p>DICKINSON, TX Church of Christ 2919 FM 517 Rd. E. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 9:45 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Craig Meyer (281) 534-4870</p>	<p>HOUSTON, TX Bellaire Church of Christ 8001 South Rice Ave. Worship 9:30 A.M. Bible Study 10:45 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. www.bellairechurchofchrist.org (713) 668-4810</p>	<p>LUFKIN, TX Timberland Dr. Church of Christ 912 S. Timberland Dr. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelists: Harold Hancock James W. Adams 634-7110 or 632-7070</p>	<p>SAN ANGELO, TX Green Meadow Church of Christ (Off Loop 306, sw part of the city) 3438 Green Meadow Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Boyd Jennings (325) 224-2848 (325)944-8147 or (325)896-2038</p>	<p>COLONIAL HEIGHTS/ PETERSBURG, VA Appomattox church of Christ 117 Orange Avenue (Ft. Lee Area) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Lenny Chapman (804) 526-6464 or (804) 675-0216</p>
<p>AUSTIN, TX Wonsley Dr. Church of Christ 507 E. Wonsley Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 2:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Ron Lehde</p>	<p>EDNA, TX 301 Robison Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (361) 782-5506 or 782-2844 Elders: S.A. Mercer & S. Wilson Evangelist: Heath Rogers</p>	<p>HOUSTON, TX Oak Forest Church of Christ 1333 Judway Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Mid-week 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jay Taylor (281) 970-2976 elysian39@juno.com</p>	<p>MANSFIELD, TX Northside Church of Christ 1820 Mansfield-Webb Road Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelists: Tom Roberts (817) 466-3160</p>	<p>SAN ANTONIO, TX Pecan Valley Church of Christ 268 Utopia (1-37 S.E. Exit Pecan Valley) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Clyde W. Carter (210) 337-6143</p>	<p>NEWPORT NEWS, VA Harpersville Rd. Church of Christ 315 Harpersville Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (757) 595-9564</p>
<p>To make changes to your ad, contact us at andyalex@bellsouth.net</p>	<p>EL PASO, TX Eastridge Church of Christ 3277 Pendleton Road Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (915) 855-1524</p>	<p>HOUSTON, TX (Southwest) Murphy Rd. Church of Christ 2025 Murphy Rd., Missouri City Worship 9:30 A.M. Bible Study 10:45 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Gene Mabry (281) 265-8071 or 261-5216</p>	<p>McKINNEY, TX Central Church of Christ 1805 White Ave. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jack Howard III (214) 544-3035</p>	<p>SHERMAN, TX Westwood Village Church of Christ 314 N. Tolbert Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Fred Watkins</p>	<p>RICHMOND (Metro), VA Courthouse Church of Christ Courthouse Rd. at Double Creek Ct. (2.2 miles S of Rt. 288) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Gene Tope (804) 790-1629 www.courthousechurchofchrist.com</p>
<p>BAYTOWN, TX Pruett and Lobit Church of Christ 701 North Pruett St. Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:40 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jesse Flowers (281) 422-5926; (281) 515-8939; (713) 818-1321</p>	<p>FORT WORTH, TX Woodmont Church of Christ 6417 Landview (at Altemasa) Worship 9:30 A.M. Bible Study 11:00 A.M. Afternoon 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Jeff S. Smith (817) 292-4908 or 426-2242 woodmontchurch.org</p>	<p>HOUSTON, TX Spring Woods Church of Christ 9955 Neuens Rd. at Witte Rd. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist (281) 795-0837</p>	<p>MESQUITE, TX (East Dallas) Westlake Church of Christ 427 Gross Rd., 75149 Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Ashley Sharkey (972) 285-1610</p>	<p>TEMPLE, TX Leon Valley Church of Christ 4404 Twin City Blvd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Warren King (254) 939-0682 or 228-5038 www.biblemoments.org</p>	<p>RICHMOND, VA Forest Hill Church of Christ 1208 W. 41st St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Jack Bise, Jr. (804) 233-5959</p>
<p>BAYTOWN, TX East Side Church of Christ 3107 N. Highway 146 Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Kris Emerson (281) 427-8729; 837-9259 422-8800; 573-1940</p>	<p>FORT WORTH, TX West Side Church of Christ 6110 White Settlement Rd. 76114 Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (817) 738-7269</p>	<p>HUNTINGTON, TX Church of Christ P.O. Box 858 One block north of U.S. 69 Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (936) 422-4640</p>	<p>MIDLAND, TX Woodcrest Drive Church of Christ 1401 Woodcrest Drive Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Danny Hooper (432) 689-0955 (432) 694-3482</p>	<p>TEMPLE, TX Southside Church of Christ 2003 S. 5th Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (254) 773-0931</p>	<p>RICHMOND, VA West End 4909 Patterson Ave. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Stacy Crim (804) 358-7933</p>
<p>BEAUMONT, TX Dowlen Rd. Church of Christ 3060 Dowlen Road Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelists: Max Dawson & David Banning (409) 866-1996</p>	<p>FRISCO, TX (North Dallas-Plano) 4220 Preston Rd. (Holiday Inn) Call for times of services. Glenn Henderson (972) 378-3621 Rex Payne (972) 740-1486 Al Payne (972) 712-9274</p>	<p>IRVING, TX Westside Church of Christ 2320 Imperial Dr. (closest to D/FW Airport) Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 9:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Mark Roberts (972) 986-9131 www.JustChristians.com</p>	<p>NACOGDOCHES, TX Stallings Dr. Church of Christ 3831 N.E. Stallings Dr. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Randy Harshbarger</p>	<p>WACO, TX Sun Valley Church of Christ 340 E. Warren St. (In Hewitt, a suburb of Waco) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Marc Smith (254) 666-1020 or 420-1484</p>	<p>RIDGEWAY, VA Church of Christ 2970 Old Leaksville Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Ken Sols (276) 956-1150 or 956-6049</p>
<p>CLEVELAND, TX Church of Christ 310 E. Houston Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Robert Davis (281) 592-5676</p>	<p>Shop online at truthbooks.net</p>	<p>LANCASTER, TX Dallas Avenue Church of Christ 601 N. Dallas Ave. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:25 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (972) 227-1119 or (817) 371-5776 lklice@sbcglobal.net www.dallasavenuechurchofchrist.org</p>	<p>ODESSA, TX Crescent Park Church of Christ 1415 Royalty Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Dale Garrison (432) 366-5071 or 413-7759</p>	<p>THE WOODLANDS, TX Woodlands Church of Christ P.O. Box 7664-77380 3987 Wellman Road Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (281) 367-2099 www.simplychristians.net</p>	<p>ROANOKE, VA Blue Ridge Church of Christ 929 Indiana Ave. N.E. 5 min. from Roanoke Convention Center 1st Lesson 9:15 A.M. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (540) 344-2755</p>
<p>CLUTE, TX Church of Christ 343 S. Main Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (979) 265-5283 or 265-2933</p>	<p>GRANBURY, TX Old Granbury Rd. Church of Christ 4313 Old Granbury Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (817) 573-6878</p>	<p>LANCASTER, TX Pleasant Run Church of Christ 831 W. Pleasant Run Rd. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (972) 227-1758 or 227-2598 www.planochurch.org</p>	<p>PLANO, TX (North Dallas Suburb) Spring Creek Church of Christ 2100 W. Spring Creek Pkwy. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (972) 517-5582 or 231-3748 www.planochurch.org</p>	<p>CHESAPEAKE, VA Tidewater Church of Christ 217 Taxus St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Steve Schlos (757) 436-6900</p>	<p>STAFFORD, VA Stafford Church of Christ 767 Jefferson Davis Hwy. Bible Class 9:00 A.M. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Mark McNabb (540) 891-1215</p>
<p>CORPUS CHRISTI, TX Hwy. 9 Church of Christ 5853 Leopard St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (361) 289-1559, 225-4792 or 289-1439</p>	<p>HOUSTON, TX Fry Rd. Church of Christ 2510 Fry Road (77084) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Michael McLenore (281) 578-1897</p>	<p>LUBBOCK, TX Indiana Ave. Church of Christ 6111 Indiana Ave. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Brett Hogland (806) 795-3377 or 928-9262</p>	<p>ROSENBERG, TX Church of Christ 908 Frost St. Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Worship 10:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Jason Trick Bldg: (281) 232-4425 Cell: (832) 228-8973</p>	<p>CHESTER, VA Chester Church of Christ 12100 Winfree St. (Central to Richmond, Hopewell, Petersburg, & Colonial Heights) Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Church Building: (804) 796-2374 Also: (804) 497-3638 or (804) 271-0877</p>	<p>VIRGINIA BEACH, VA Southside Church of Christ 5652 Haden Rd. Worship 11:00 A.M. Robert Mallard (757) 464-4574</p>

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<p>VIRGINIA BEACH, VA Virginia Beach Church of Christ Pembroke Manor Recreation Building 4452 Hinsdale St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (757) 486-6639</p>	<p>CHARLESTON, WV Church of Christ 873 Oakwood Rd. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (304) 727-1794</p>	<p>RAVENSWOOD, WV Church of Christ 1101 Gallatin St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Rick Christian 273-0261 or 273-3267</p>
<p>BELLINGHAM, WA Mt. Baker Church of Christ 1860 Mt. Baker Hwy. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Joe Price (360) 752-2692 or 380-2960 www.bibleanswer.com/mtbaker</p>	<p>CLARKSBURG, WV Westside Church of Christ Davison Run Road Sunday Morning 9:30 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (304) 622-5433</p>	<p>WELLSBURG, WV Charles St. Church of Christ 836 Charles Street Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (304) 527-4438 or 737-4158</p>
<p>SEQUIM, WA Church of Christ American Legion Hall Corner of Sequim Ave. & Prairie St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Call for Wednesday meeting place (360) 683-2152</p>	<p>FAIRMONT, WV Eastside Church of Christ 1929 Morgantown Ave. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:45 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (304) 366-4523</p>	<p>MILWAUKEE, WI Metropolitan Church of Christ 1029 S. 58th St. West Allis Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: David Girardot (414) 257-3035 Church: 258-8520</p>
<p>SUNNYSIDE, WA Sunnyside Church of Christ (sound) 1312 East Edison Bible Study 2:00 P.M. Worship 3:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Steven J. Wallace (509) 837-2813 www.sunnysidechurchofchrist.com</p>	<p>MORGANTOWN, WV Glen Oaks Church of Christ Greenbag Road Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:20 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (304) 296-9793</p>	<p>CANADA Calgary, Alberta Northside Church of Christ 803 - 20 A Ave. N.E. Calgary, Alberta T2E ISI Sunday 10, 11, 6 Wednesday 7:00 P.M. (403) 276-8088</p>
<p>TACOMA, WA Manitou Church of Christ 4806 So. 66th St. (P.O. Box 7523, 98407) Sunday 10:00 A.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (253) 759-7875 (425) 557-9242 Voice Mail: (253) 752-5616</p>	<p>MOUNDSVILLE, WV Church of Christ 210 Cedar St. Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Mid-week 7:30 P.M. Evangelist: Brian Price (304) 845-2820, 845-4940</p>	<p>CANADA Jordan, Ontario Jordan Church of Christ 2861 Regional Road 81 (Highway #8) Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Preacher - Chad Comfort (905) 562-4739</p>
<p>YAKIMA, WA W. Washington Ave. Church of Christ 902 W. Washington Ave. Conservative Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 6:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (509) 248-8190 or 248-5614</p>	<p>MOUNDSVILLE, WV Roberts Ridge Church of Christ Bible Study 9:45 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M. Evening 6:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Don Terrill: (304) 845-2344 Mail to: Sam Wood (304) 845-2202 406 Jefferson Ave. Glen Dale, WV 26038</p>	<p>CANADA Hamilton, Ontario 450 Concession St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:00 A.M. Monday 7:00 P.M. Tuesday 7:00 P.M. Steve Rudd, Evangelist (905) 575-8437</p>
<p>CHARLESTON, WV Church of Christ 522 Daugherty St. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Evening 5:30 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (304) 346-2112 or Kent Clark (304) 342-0237 mansuper1965@hotmail.com</p>	<p>PARKERSBURG, WV Martrtown Church of Christ 825 Martrtown Road Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:15 A.M. Evening 7:00 P.M. Wednesday 7:30 P.M. (304) 861-0342 or 422-7458</p>	<p>CANADA Peterborough, Ontario The Board Rm., Parkway Place Mall, Lansdowne St. W. Bible Study 10:00 A.M. Worship 10:50 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M. Evangelist: Peter McPherson Other meetings: phone (705) 742-5349</p>

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